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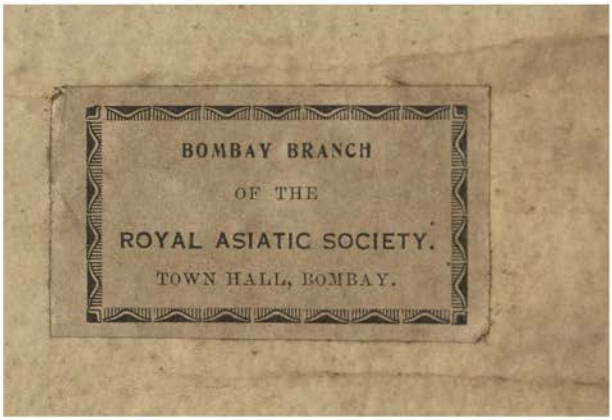

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LORD ROSEBERY'S SPEECHES

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(1874–1896)

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PREFACE

IN setting forth this edition of Lord Rosebery's speeches, the Publisher has endeavoured, as far as lies in his power, to give those in which Lord Rosebery gives his views upon the principal political and social questions which have arisen during the last twenty-two years.

The Publisher is indebted to Mr. Moberley Bell, the manager of the *Times*, for his kind permission to republish these speeches from the columns of his paper.

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LORD ROSEBERY'S SPEECHES

THE TRUE LEVERAGE OF EMPIRE

Presidential Address at the Social Science Congress, Glasgow, 30th September 1874

IF, in addressing this great meeting, I were to speak out of the fulness of my heart, I should tell of nothing but my own misgivings. But it is too much the practice on these occasions to take up time selfishly in apologies. You asked me kindly and generously to come here to-night. I thought it a clear duty to obey your summons, and reciprocate your sympathy. But none the less sensible am I of my own deficiencies and of my need of your further large indulgence; none the less do I feel as if I were only placed in this prominent position to serve as a foil to the ripe wisdom of so many in this Congress. It is impossible for any one at my age to pretend to instruct—few can have adequate knowledge; none sufficient experience. I can offer, then, no fresh contribution to your

stock of information. I can only, as it were, set in motion my small share of electric current of sympathy and interest, which is surely not the least valuable of the features of this Congress. But I would before all express my pride and my joy at making this first visit to Glasgow under the auspices of your association. There are probably few places to which an Englishman can point with more pride than to Glasgow; none perhaps which a Scotchman can regard with so much.

I suppose that there are in this city half a million of inhabitants; that her rental amounts to two millions and a half; that the shipbuilding of the Clyde is supreme in the world. How long has it taken to produce this immense result? What is the origin of this great population? Whence dates this easy predominance in shipping, this vast collection of material wealth?

Two centuries ago Glasgow was officially described as "a neat burghe town, consisting of foure streets." At that time she possessed twelve vessels carrying 957 tons. In the year 1718, little more than a century and a half ago, the first Scottish ship that ever crossed the Atlantic—a vessel of 60 tons—was launched in the Clyde, which has since witnessed the building of the Cunard line of steamers. And as for her rental of two millions and a half, it has been computed

that the rental of the whole of Scotland did not a century ago exceed one million sterling.

We could not indeed have chosen a more suggestive scene for our Congress, or one where social science should be more dear. For here we have a great material result rapidly produced by the exertions of a vast labouring population; and no one surely, in considering the labours of this Congress and its functions, can avoid seeing that the most vital and perpetual question before it is the well-being of our working classes; a vital question, because on the apt solution of it depends the commercial supremacy, the political solidarity, nay, the very existence of our empire. To my mind, a body like ours has no more direct or important duties than the attempt to raise the condition of the nation by means which Parliament is unable or disdains to apply.

Here we have an illimitable field of operations. Parliament can give a workman a vote; it cannot give him a comfortable home. Nor can it sift and exhibit the many contrivances which may be placed before him of bettering himself, of increasing his capacities, and enlarging his enjoyments. All this lies within our province, and it is work incalculably more important than the great mass of our parliamentary legislation. In this country we are surrounded by a great aggregation of humanity,

seething, labouring, begrimed humanity; children of toil who have made Glasgow what she is, and can alone raise and maintain her; not mere machines of production, but vehicles of intelligence, mixed in nationality and various in opinion. You cannot appeal to them by common feelings or uniform interests. They are there a dark and mighty power, like the Cyclopean inmates of Ætna. I must honestly avow my conviction—though to those who see how many there are who profess to represent and understand the working classes it may seem rash, while to others it may seem a truism—that this vast labouring population of ours has not made itself, its wants, its creeds, and its interests sufficiently intelligible to many of us. How indeed, if it be otherwise, is it that the problems connected with their condition have advanced so little towards solution? How is it, otherwise, that each political party claims with equal certainty, and on every point, to possess the sympathy and confidence of the working man? How else is it that, when the working class makes its voice heard on any question, it comes upon us like thunder in a clear sky? I avow myself no exception to the rule, but for that very reason, perhaps, I can conceive no subjects more interesting than those which relate to the welfare of our labouring population.

Perhaps, then, you will allow me to disregard the ordinary precedent upon these occasions. The opening address of this Congress has commonly surveyed the present position of those questions with which your society is accustomed to deal or which it watches with interest. But speaking, as I do, in the presence of many who, in the various sections, will discuss such subjects with ripe authority of knowledge and experience, I should feel it presumptuous in me to poise a light sentence or hazard a shallow conjecture where my hearers can for themselves sound the very depth, and perhaps approximate solution.

I will then, if you please, attempt to-night to take stock in some degree of the various means by which it is sought to raise the condition of the working classes; a group of subjects some of which appear under different divisions in your programme, but which are ultimately, I had almost said solemnly, connected together; and I would do so rather as a sign of humble interest in them, than with the slightest pretension of having anything original to advance. The moment is as suitable as the place for the discussion of these vital and national questions. In times such as these, of high wage, of general peace, of immunity from furious political discord, the well-being of the labouring classes often appears secured, and does

not always attract the attention of statesmen. It is, however, precisely then that it is possible to take measures which, without exciting jealousy on one hand, and suspicion on the other, may secure that well-being in less prosperous times. It is then that even the Greeks may innocently bring gifts. But should there come a European war such as we weathered successfully at the beginning of the century, but which left us surrounded for the most part with battered wrecks and with stranded hulls, we might possibly find our teeming population, confined within so small an ark, a perilous and disheartening agency. Moreover, while our numbers increase in a greater proportion daily, it would seem that for a few years our principal outlet for emigration may be partially blocked up. It appears more than probable that for some time, owing to late commercial disasters, and it may be because corn-growing in the west has been somewhat overdone, the United States will not find employment for that million and a quarter of emigrants, more or less, that we are accustomed annually to send to her. This is the most important problem which can occupy statesmen; and at the same time the most difficult for a statesman to face. For Parliament can seldom see its way to interference. Nor is it, indeed, desirable that it should do so.

TRUE LEVERAGE OF EMPIRE

Legislatures and Governments have at various times, by direct laws, attempted to benefit the working classes; but the most obvious instances of this—the national workshops of 1848, and the decrees of the Parisian Commune in 1871—have been conspicuous failures. It is well, then, that in this present time, so peaceful and blessed for us, we can here discuss, however slowly and imperfectly, the pregnant topics which our programmes suggest. And there is so much to be done; our civilisation is so little removed from barbarism. At this moment there is a daily column in the newspapers devoted to recording brutal outrages, where human beings have behaved like wild beasts. Every policeman in London is assaulted on an average about once in two years. Within the memory of living men, the workmen at the salt-pans of Joppa, only a mile or two from Edinburgh, were serfs—*adscripti glebæ*—and sold along with the land on which they dwelt. Neither they nor their children could remove from the spot, or alter their calling. The late Lord Provost of Edinburgh, who bears the honoured name of Chambers, records his having talked to such men.

What a hell, too, was that described to Lord Ashley's Commission of 1842. In the mines were women and children employed as beasts; dragging trucks on all fours, pursuing in fetid tunnels the

degraded tasks which no animal could be found to undertake. We know that equal horrors existed in the brickfield two or three years ago, where there were 30,000 children employed, looking like moving masses of the clay they bore, whose ages averaged from 3½ years to 17; and when an average case was thus described—

"I had a child weighed very recently, and though he was somewhat over eight years old, he weighed but 52½ lbs., and was employed carrying 43 lbs. of clay on his head an average distance of 15 miles daily, and worked 73 hours a week. This is only an average case of what many poor children are doing in England at the present time; and we need not wonder at their stunted and haggard appearance when we take into account the tender age at which they are sent to their Egyptian tasks."

Then again—

"All goodness and purity seems to become stamped out of these people; and were I to relate [says a witness who has worked himself in the brickfields] what could be related, the whole country would become sickened and horrified."

It would not indeed be difficult, and it would be painfully instructive, to draw out a dismal catalogue of facts to prove how little the splendour of our civilisation differs from the worst horrors of

barbarism. And yet, after all, we can only come to the hackneyed conclusion, that the sole remedy for this state of things is education, a humanising education. It is not a particularly brilliant or original thing to say, but severe truth is seldom brilliant and original. There is a noble passage in De Tocqueville, known probably to all and too long to quote here, which points out that knowledge is the arm of democracy ; that every intellectual discovery, every development of science, is a new source of strength to the people ; that thought and eloquence and imagination, the divine gifts which know no limit of class, even when bestowed on the enemies of the popular cause, yet serve it by exalting the natural grandeur of man ; and that literature is the vast armoury, open to all indeed, but where the poor, who have hardly any other, may always find their weapons. These, I say, are features of education which all recognise, though some may profess to dread them.

But there is a general expediency besides. Take the case of machinery. The winter nights of 1830 were bright with blazing rick yards. No farmer in the southern counties felt his stacks safe. There was a time of terror in England, and of retribution. "In Kent," says Miss Martineau, "there were gibbets erected in Penenden Heath, and bodies swung there in the December winds, bodies of

boys about eighteen or nineteen years old, but looking much younger; brothers who had said to each other on arriving at the gallows, 'That looks an awful thing!'" Again, take the Luddite riots of 1812 and 1816, where cunning and furious mobs nearly stamped out lace manufacture at Nottingham. The broken frames and the burning ricks were ignorant protests against machinery. Well, intelligence has marched a little, and what is the case now? What do the associated masters—no unduly partial authority—affirm? The accuracy of this statement is manifest from the fact that the operatives are now the earnest advocates for improvements in machinery; whereas twenty years ago it was no uncommon thing for them to strike at the factory where they were introduced. Here, it seems to me, we can put our finger on definite and tangible progress, due solely to increased intelligence.

Take another case which shows the need of it. Wages were probably never so high in England as in 1873. Nine years before an increasing spirit duty paid £9,692,515 to the Excise. In the last financial year the Excise receipts from spirits amounted to £14,639,562. I am not one of those who are appalled, certainly not surprised, by this expenditure. But see how it strengthens the argument. A man who has but natural instincts

to guide him comes into a fortune and at once procures himself an increased quantity of what has been in smaller doses an enjoyment and a solace. Has he been educated to find his amusement elsewhere? If one of us should succeed to a large fortune to-morrow, we certainly should not spend our inheritance in drink; but the difference, I venture to say, is solely one of culture. Well, my contention is that in an educated country, among a nation educated not in Shakespeare and the musical glasses, but so instructed as to be able to find amusement outside the skittle-alley and the public-house, a great increase in wages would not have been followed by so enormous an increase in the consumption of spirits; and an enormous consumption of spirits means an enormous amount of crime and pauperism.

The assertion is capable of proof which is almost direct. The best educated country in the world is Saxony. This is what a Saxon mining superintendent says: "We have a few who drink brandy, but as a rule they are steady." Take another country where education is universal: "In 1819, compulsory laws, requiring every parent to educate every child, were enacted in Prussia. At first, of course, there was a violent opposition and the usual hue and cry of invaded rights; but in twelve years crime and pauperism have dimin-

ished forty per cent." Moreover, we not only suffer morally, but materially. Pay-day in England is often followed not merely by drinking, but by a blank as regards work. "If you pay," says Mr Brassey, "wages weekly on Saturday, it rarely happens that any considerable amount of work is done on Monday. On the Trent Valley line payment of wages took place at the commencement of the line once a month. The pay-day was followed by the same incapacity for exertion which is unhappily still observable."

Take the colliers. The papers have been filled for the past year or so with anecdotes of the colliers, their immense earnings, their expenditure in champagne, in horses, and hot-house fruit. I am persuaded that there is a large section of society which believes that the colliers pass three days a week in sucking peaches and driving tandem. But what is the state of intelligence among even the younger generation of colliers? "Out of fifty lads examined in nine different night schools in 1867,' says Mr. Sandford, "twenty-nine, or fifty-eight per cent., could not read." And yet we wonder that our colliers do not invest their money wisely.

I will only put one more case.

Improvements in locomotion have made life more easy and living more cheap. Our lives are staked on the exact intelligence of each of a great

number of comparatively uneducated men. When we recollect the nice adjustment, the momentous punctuality, which are required of a pointsman or a signalman, and all that depends on them, we should ensure that such responsibilities should not be cast upon men whose faculties have not been carefully trained. In addition to all the other chances of life, there is but a point which separates a railway passenger from death. And yet we act as though education were desirable indeed, but not imperative.

Well, but it may be asked, to what does this recital of known facts tend? To a very simple proposition. I cannot believe that there ever was more clear necessity before any Government or any country than the imperative duty laid upon one to institute a directly compulsory education. Among the upper classes such compulsion exists, more stringent than any enactment that a legislature can frame, and one which every pressure in this direction laid on the lower classes will increase threefold; the compulsion is moral and the penalty is extinction.

If the upper class shall become less educated than the class beneath it, we may take it for granted that by a natural process of subsidence that upper class will sink to the bottom, and that lower class will rise to the top.

We are told that such an enactment would be an interference with individual liberty, and that the nation is not ripe for it. If it be true that the nation is not ripe for the reception of an undoubted benefit,—a benefit as clear and as certain as fresh air and pure water,—we can only be the more certain that this education is the more needed. If it be seriously argued that the interference with individual liberty is too stringent, we must call into the witness-box Macaulay's well-known schoolboy to assure us that a policeman, a tax, and a railway bill are all direct interferences with individual liberty. The natives of Scotland are not considered unduly servile; yet they submit to compulsory education. The same cry was raised in Prussia more than half a century ago, but the education of her people has not merely effaced Jena and its consequences, but produced the German Empire of to-day.

I should not have adduced facts sufficiently well known to everybody, if it had not been apparently necessary to prove a self-evident proposition—that in these days knowledge is strength and immediate strength, and that education has revived in its most startling aspect the exploded doctrine of the balance of power. It seems certain that that unhappy doctrine, which, like the perverted rod of Moses, was only applied to cause streams of blood

to flow, will be verified with regard to educated and uneducated nations. We raise armies with great distress and expenditure—armies from which the annual desertions are little less than 6000; we never weary of forging plates of iron with which to resist cannonades we trust never to encounter; we construct artillery which we hope may rather be superseded than employed; we impose loads of taxation for all this, and we heedlessly neglect the true leverage of empire. I venture to suggest that a social science congress has no fairer field than to urge upon Government this peaceful method of supremacy, so congenial to its theories; and that no Government worthy of the name should shrink from an invasion upon these, forsooth, sacred liberties of the subject.

The question is one of security, but power requires something more. We require, if we would remain what we are, a special education of two kinds. The first I would venture to urge with the more confidence, as your memorial on the subject has done so much, is general instruction in economical principles. The science of political economy is not at this moment perhaps in particular good odour. It is fashionable for people who pride themselves on being warm-hearted to flout political economy, though I venture to think that those who have heard Mr. Fawcett

speak, or who have read the Autobiography of John Stuart Mill, would deny that political economists are bloodless beings. But, in spite of easy sarcasms, the fact of direct utility remains.

Take the case of strikes. Strikes are only the development of that slow but gigantic process by which, all the world over, capital and labour are readjusting their relations, and that supreme tendency in this age, of men as well as of nations, towards glomeration. In the first clash of conflict they have disturbed our trade, but, with a larger intelligence, based on economical principles, is it not certain that each side will discover that their prosperity must be mutual, and their interests inseparably entwined? Again, consider for a moment. Strikes are rare in Germany. In Wurtemberg, where every individual in the kingdom above the age of ten can read and write, they are unknown. It is true that in the United States, owing perhaps to sudden commercial crises that have occurred there, they are on the increase; but it must be honourably remembered that the Executive Committee of the New York Tailors' Union in 1869 announced the termination of their strike, and at the same time their determination to abjure strikes for the more valid support of co-operation.

What are the bloodiest and most perilous strikes

of which we have record? Surely the strike of the Belgian miners in 1869, and the strike at Creuzot in January 1870, which was suppressed by bayonets, and which anticipated the Commune. In both countries thirty per cent. of the people are unable to read or write. From both countries proceed the wildest economical theories. Is it fanciful to see a connection between these facts, to believe that a comparatively slight knowledge of economical truths would prevent vexatious strikes, or to hope that the day might come when the relations of capital and labour might be largely improved by the teaching of political economy in our public schools?

But there is a second kind of special education that we need. Every man indeed is entitled to this—that he shall be able to obtain a general education fitting him to become a good citizen. To this the State must look as a moral duty. But beyond the duty comes the expediency. If a State, after doing its duty, has time to consider expediency (and this indeed, as the world goes, is reversing the usual order of things), it should consider whether in these days, when the essence of prosperity is commerce, and the essence of commerce is rivalry, it be not well by special training to fit the producers for production, and the distributors for distribution. The want of this

special education is the real requirement of our industry, without which certain natural advantages, supposed to be inherent in the Anglo-Saxon race, will not avail us in the struggle for commercial predominance. It will not be new to you to hear that, without technical knowledge, and without a generally diffused knowledge of the principles of trade, a nation may easily lag behind in the world of trade.

This truth, like all truths, is not new ; the alarm bell has been ringing for years. Professor Tyndal in 1867 said, "I have long entertained the opinion that, in virtue of the better education provided by continental nations, England must one day, and that no distant one, find herself outstripped by those nations both in the arts of peace and of war." We are living now riotously and recklessly ; we are consuming far more coal than we need ; we are spending selfishly the rightful heritage of our posterity. Instead of this, our anxiety should surely be to husband our powers, and to educate our people, for we have no new dominions to explore, our island is no more capable of expansion than a quarter-deck. We should look the future boldly in the face. See the effects of technical education in one simple case. Switzerland is hemmed in with mountains, her climate is unfavourable, her soil is limited, her one resource

of water power is precarious and expensive, she has no coal and no harbours, yet she threatens the silk trade of Lyons, and takes the ribbon trade of Coventry. Her exports of silk alone rose in the eleven years between 1860 and 1871, 147 per cent. in quantity, and 132 per cent. in value. Can any cause be assigned for this except the complete and special education which she gives in primary schools, and practical schools, and trade schools, and secondary schools, and cantonal schools, all topped up by the great Polytechnic Institute in Zurich? The Swiss manufacturer lives simply; he is a master of his business; and his workmen, with whom he is perpetually in contact, respect him for this. Master and servant have often been at the same school learning their craft; they know it thoroughly; and though it is said that an English servant will get through in ten hours as much work as a Swiss in twelve, judging by results we may believe that the technical results of the one brings him on a level with the physical capacity of the other.

And the mention of Switzerland leads me to say that technical instruction is needed as much by the employer as by the workman. Mr. Scott Russell, in his interesting book on technical education, points out with great force how the practical ignorance of the master may earn him

the contempt of the men. The ignorance and the distrust will produce the middleman, who will still further divide the two; and the result is complete want of sympathy on both sides, with all the evils that that want implies. The master becomes a remote figurehead; the interest of the workman in his work passes away, with the honour of perfection and the pride of finish. Hence there originate those modern contrivances which designedly suppress superiority in order to produce a dead level of wage for the good worker and the bad; contrivances which may serve the temporary purposes of strategy, but which strike at the root of character. "In the end," says Mr. Russell, "men cease to care for excellence or sufficiency of work. They end with treating with mercantile masters for mercantile terms. They say to him who cannot appreciate good work, 'You shall pay us all alike,' and they are right, for where men are paid unequally by the mere favour of a foreman, middleman, or manager, or by the mere whim of an unskilled master, promotion is but another name for favouritism, and is most unjust to the best man. But this forced equality acts upon skill, and takes away all encouragement to personal superiority."

In another branch of technical education we are almost entirely deficient. I mean a rational

education for commercial pursuits. The German clerk who comes to England astonishes our merchants, not merely by his mastery over two or three languages, but by his mastery of the principles and *rationale* of his business. For this it would be supposed in a country like ours there would be ample means of instruction. As a matter of fact there is but one professorship in the principles of commerce in the United Kingdom, and that has neither endowment nor scholarships. It is probable that technical and commercial education will have to be provided by the State in England; it is more than probable it will not be provided till our eyes have been opened to its necessity by grave and painful facts. But here in Scotland we have educational endowments bequeathed by commercial men for the benefit of their class, which are of little use at present, and which might fairly be devoted to giving practical commercial and technical education. There is the noble revenue left by George Heriot, who, from what we know of his character, would have rejoiced to see these days of prosperity in Scotland, and to further that prosperity with his fortune.

A royal commission is giving its attention to this subject, but it has no executive powers, and public opinion has more influence on these points than a hundred royal commissioners. And it

should be remembered that if Scotland, out of her endowments, could set on foot a successful practical or polytechnic school, she would — to paraphrase the words of Pitt — "having saved herself by her energy, save England by her example."

Again, take the case of agriculture. It has been said that the agricultural production of England might be doubled if more capital were put into the land. It is not easy to verify statements of this kind; but it is certain that more special knowledge of agriculture would have to precede the larger application of capital. I suppose there is no country in the world where so much farming capital is laid out to the acre as in the lowlands of Scotland. But this was not the case until Lord Haddington, at the beginning of the last century, sent for farmers from Dorsetshire (where perhaps a return of the favour might not be unwelcome now), to give special agricultural instruction in his neighbourhood. What a demand there is for special agricultural education, not merely on behalf of young men who wish to become British farmers or land agents, but of those who intend to emigrate to our colonies. See how many youths there are who come to board with our great farmers as pupils in agriculture. The efficacy of this method is indeed doubtful; the

pupil has generally too much independence, and the tutor not enough authority; but this very fact proves the strength of the demand. And these are the men who go out to our colonies and influence the destinies of future empires. Would it not be well, then, as the demand for this education exists, and as it has so direct a bearing on the prosperity of the country and of our labouring classes, that the Government, or we ourselves, should devise some means of meeting it? In Wurtemburg, where there is a carefully contrived system of public agricultural instruction, there were in 1868 12,040 persons being educated in these schools.

And here, though it diverges for a moment from the main subject, I must say I am not one of those who recommend special education for one class alone. I cannot see any argument in favour of technical education for the artisan, which does not go much farther. The only class, so far as I know, for which technical education is not proposed, is the class for which it is most necessary—I mean our rulers. Is there any school or college in Great Britain which professes to educate men for government or statesmanship? Eton, I believe, trains a large proportion of our legislators, yet I have grave doubts if Eton provides any special instruction for them in their future duties. We

have medical colleges, and clerical colleges, and military colleges; and some of the best minds in the country are now devising schemes of legal education. We have no hereditary surgeons, or priests, or soldiers, or lawyers. We have, however, a large body of hereditary legislators; we have a considerable number of men who are hereditary legislators during good behaviour, for they, and their fathers before them, have sat in Parliament so long as they were solvent and respectable. But for these technical education is not provided nor even contemplated. We agree that an artisan cannot do his work properly without special instruction; but for those to whom we entrust our fates, our fortunes, and our honour, no such training is requisite. It is expected and assumed that a peer shall take to politics as a duck takes to swimming. Nor have we improved on our fathers. Macaulay tells us that it was considered wonderful that the elder Pitt had never read *Vatel*. But can we feel any certainty that any Member of Parliament has read *The Wealth of Nations*? Suppose candidates for Parliament were examined like candidates for the civil service, or for commissions in the army, should we discover the sure traces of training in political history and political economy? I venture to say that there are many Members of Parliament who would themselves be

the first to lament the deficiencies of their education in their craft, and the labour with which they had at a later and busier period of life to repair them.

But to return to the artisan class. The agencies I have named are external, but there is an internal agency by which workmen have effected much for themselves. I mean by applying the principle of union. It is true, of course, that unions among workpeople, with a view to the artificial raising of their wages, may hamper production and harshly control freedom of action. On the other hand, they have often been of real service by promoting intelligent communication between workpeople in different parts of the country, and in ascertaining the due recompense of labour. Few impartial persons will be disposed to deny that, though it has caused bitter feelings on both sides, as all such revolutions must, the great social movement which has recently united the English peasantry is likely to diffuse enlightenment, to encourage independence, and to place wages on a more clear and rational footing. The natural adjustment of the right proportion between the profits of capital and the wages of labour is a tolerably sure, it may be, but certainly a very slow process, and union among workmen has had a beneficial effect in hastening it. Strikes, which cause so much distress and which greatly hinder production, we must lament.

But so long as capital and labour continue distinct and opposing interests, is it likely that strikes will be rare? Co-operation, indeed, is the obvious remedy for all these troubles; but co-operation can hardly, so far, be considered a success in this country. It appears to require a more general intelligence and a greater accumulation of capital among the working classes than exists at present. The largest co-operative association for productive purposes in this country is that of the Ouseburn Engine Works. Yet even here, with the strictest co-operative democracy, a strike has recently taken place of certain of the workmen against the association—that is against themselves. In agriculture the Speaker of the House of Commons attempted a co-operative experiment so favourable to the workmen that even had it succeeded it would have been no pledge for the success of ordinary co-operation. Yet the men, though they were to receive when the year was good, and to lose nothing when the year was bad, did not, it appears, take a single share. So that, as regards co-operation, we cannot say that at this moment we have much reason to look for assistance from that quarter.

But union as a principle (and union, of course, must precede co-operation) is the great watchword of our age. Nowhere has the great multiplication

of unions been more extraordinary than in the United States. The very names of some of them are quaint enough—the Advocates of Justice, the Knights of Honour, the Sons of Toil, the Brethren of Labour, the Sovereigns of Industry. But incomparably above these there towers the gigantic association of the patrons of industry, commonly called The Grange — a great agricultural co-operative independent union. Its progress has been amazing. Its first grange or lodge was formed in the last month of 1867. There are at this moment 20,500, with 1,311,220 members. At the end of the year it is certain that they will have 30,000, with 2,000,000 members. The order is practically identical with the agricultural population of six States, and with two-thirds of the farmers in ten others. In Missouri alone there are said to be 2150 granges; they are making way in Canada. Pennsylvania began the year with six lodges, and at this moment she has 800. Why this enormous increase? The answer is simple, for it is alleged that membership adds not less than 50 per cent. to the income of the granges. The Californian granges have their own fleet, and ship their corn direct to Liverpool, by which they saved two million dollars in freights in the year 1873. The vessels bring as return cargoes, tea, sugar, coffee, silk and other commodities, which

are retailed to members at cost price; and a system is being organised by which their ships will return with every foreign article which the members may need. They are thus an independent mercantile nation. But they are more; they have a social, religious, and political, as well as a co-operative aspect. They have a secret password renewed annually; grange banks, grange plough manufactories, grange grocery stores, besides grange poems, and grange burial services. They declare that they are going to labour for the good of all mankind, of whom they intend to raise the standard. They mean to secure obedience to the laws and general brotherhood; and, on the other hand, to suppress fashion, bribery, and selfish ambition. Their very success has made them run into extravagances; but that success is a social symptom, which we cannot afford to disregard.

To pass to the physical condition of our workmen, a great problem at once presents itself in the dwellings of our urban poor. This is a subject which we hope to hear discussed in one of our sections; and indeed it is locally interesting, for it is one of the fields in which the present honoured Provost of this city has gained distinction. Municipal improvements, and the increased value of land in towns, are daily thrusting the home of the artisan farther from the scene of

his labours. This in itself is by no means an evil. The demolition which compels the crowded inhabitant of an alley or a close to seek a home in purer air may always be considered a blessing; where tramways exist it certainly is so. Tramways have done much in many places to solve the great question of healthy and handy dwellings for our workmen. They are indeed the inconvenience of the opulent, and the luxury of the poor. You may always measure exactly the extent of the democracy of a country by the extent of its tramways. But for a concentrated nation like the population of London, tramways are insufficient. Trains form the means of transit between the work and the home of the artisan. Of late, however, a tendency, to call it by a mild name, to the discontinuance of cheap early trains has been shown by railway companies, partly because they are not profitable, partly, it may be, as a means of compelling the legislature to abolish the passenger duty. This raises the large question, which is always perilous for undertakings of great public utility conducted by private enterprise, how far railways should be regarded as purely commercial speculations which must not regard national interests in the very least. Much in the way of private interest, the homes of the rich and poor alike are and have been sacrificed to railways as

being a universal benefit. So long as they continue to be so, no complaint of private injury can be made. But if railway directors forsake this high ground, announce themselves as managers of mere commercial speculations, and disregard that public convenience which they receive privileges to protect, they may chance upon evil times. If the legislature shall once be called upon to weigh the privileges accorded to railway companies against the conveniences they concede, it will probably not treat the question as purely one of dividends.

But besides the facilities of railroad and tramway, other efforts have been made in some degree to solve this difficulty. There are the buildings erected by the Peabody Trustees, where, however, some inconvenience is said to be caused by the rule that no work must be done at home. Nor is it quite clear that the tenants are of the class for whom the buildings were intended. Then there are several building companies which not merely provide excellent buildings, and thereby raise the character of the other houses in the neighbourhood, but which pay fair dividends besides. Thus the Metropolitan Association pays an average dividend of $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The Improved Industrial Artisans' Dwellings Company pays 5 per cent. The London Labourers' Dwellings Society pays 5 per cent. The Artisans', Labourers', and General Dwellings

Company pays 6 per cent. This last association has built the Shaftesbury Park township, which was inaugurated under brilliant auspices this year. There are no public-houses or beershops on that estate; but the demand for the cottages, some hundred in number, far exceeds the supply, and the success of the undertaking has been so great that the directors have just bought another property in Harrow Road which will accommodate 14,000 more inhabitants. "While Parliament," writes the manager, "is discussing these questions, I venture to submit that we have practically solved the problem." Nor can I disagree with him.

In other countries we may notice the curious experiment of the Social Palace of Guise, but which at the present is only an experiment, and one which probably would not adapt itself to the habits of this country, as well as the Cité Ouvriere at Mulhouse, which, however, affords us no assistance as a precedent, for one half of the required capital was contributed by Government. In Belgium, also, the Messrs. D'Andrimont have erected a very complete hotel, the Hotel Louise, for their colliers, which gives a fair return for the capital invested, and where the food is as economical and as good as in one of the famous cheap dining-rooms of this city. In New York the difficulty of getting good houses for the poor is

greater if possible than here. The houses are built by great landlords, most of them large owners of real property, who lease them to middlemen, who in their turn sublet them at an enormous profit. The owner gets six or seven per cent for his outlay, the middleman makes from fifteen to thirty more out of the tenants. The consequence is that rents are enormous, and, in the opinion of many, eat up the difference between the wages of unskilled labour there, and the same wages here. It is melancholy that such a state of things should exist in a city which offers so many attractions to the thrifty artisan, and knowing, as I do, how many good hearts and heads in New York are perpetually ready to assist in any scheme which may benefit their poorer neighbours, I cannot doubt that some method will be devised of bettering the present condition of affairs. There are so many men in America who bequeath their fortunes to philanthropic objects that it seems a pity none should have devised money for the formation of a township like Shaftesbury Park. It is only fair to add that the case of New York is exceptional. It is greatly overcrowded owing to the immense number of immigrants who, landing there, proceed no farther.

In Philadelphia things are much better. An excellent system prevails there, by which landlords

build neat, small houses, and let them directly to working men for about six per cent on the investment, with the privilege of buying outright at the original cost during a certain number of years. In this way there has grown up in Philadelphia a large class of freeholders who are probably the most prosperous body of their class in the world, and a very backbone of strength and order in the commonwealth. Another great effort is being unobtrusively made for the comfort of the populace. The enjoyments of club life, which have such an attraction for the Anglo-Saxon race, are being extended to the artisan. The admirable promoters of this movement believe, with fair reason, that as public-houses offer social attractions to the tired workman irrespective of drink, so clubs are the most formidable competitors which the public-house can have. "When every man," they say, "has a club and institute within reach, where he can find better society and more varied than at the tap-room, he will leave the latter for the former." In Wisbeck, with a population of 12,000, there is a club with 700 members, with extensive buildings, comprising a gymnasium, a hall, a clock-tower and a library, with £1089 deposited last year in the savings bank, £464 in its coal club; with classes of music, of science, and of art. It is said that there is a visible difference between the private

homes of those who are members and those who are not. . . .

I now come to a large division of the subject where we may thankfully remember that much has been effected during the last session of Parliament.

We have considered some of the means at any-rate of ameliorating, morally and physically, the great mass of the nation ; and as we have discussed how, by education, we can ensure the progressive march of intellect among rising and future generations, so it will not be out of place if I dwell here for a moment on another question which relates to the physical preservation and improvement of our race. We all know to a certain extent the history of factory legislation, how the sacred tradition of the great work was handed down by the first Sir Robert Peel, whose claims to national gratitude have been so beautifully obscured by the greater claims of his illustrious son ; to Oastler and Vadler, and Hobhouse and Ashley, and Mundella. In the last session of Parliament the main principles of Mr. Mundella's Factory Bill, embodied in a Government measure, passed through both Houses, so that the hours of labour for women and children are now limited to fifty-six and a half in a week. But although much has been effected, it may be regarded as serious that so keen and independent a thinker as Mr. Fawcett should have offered

determined resistance to the Bill. But his argument was founded on the assumption that those whom the Bill is taking care of are well able to take care of themselves, which is at least a doubtful proposition; and that legislative interference to be logical should be complete, and should extend even to women employed in domestic service. But no one would deny that if great injury to women were to be apprehended as an effect of domestic service,—that if, for example, every master was a Legree and every mistress a Brownrigg,—the legislature would have to interfere for the protection of maids. Nothing of the sort is, however, pretended.

Now we have evidence, and very complete evidence, that injury is done to women, and not merely to women but to their descendants, by their undue employment in factories. Parliament must in consequence determine what limitation must be placed on factory labour, not merely for the protection of weak women now, but in its own imperial interests for the preservation of health in the children of these women—the future citizens of the country. Nor is it certain that Mr. Fawcett's other assumption, that the classes affected are well able to take care of themselves, is in any degree correct. It is certain that women, from love of approbation, as well as from those feelings of un-

selfishness which do honour to them as wives, are only too easily led to work beyond their powers. Among girls there is sometimes the further inducement of marriage. . . .

The conditions of life in this country are rapidly reversing themselves. Wealth is doubling itself, and increasing the population; greater care in management and subtlety in mechanical appliances are diminishing, and must further diminish, the proportion of persons employed, especially in agriculture. Here is the problem: daily a greater population, daily in all probability less work, which means less subsistence.

We are shut up by a sea with our surging myriads, —a source of strength if guided and controlled; if not, an immeasurable volcanic power. Many of them must go forth to people the world. Our race has colonised and colonises, has influenced and influences; and in future ages seems likely further to colonise and influence a great part of the habitable globe. So great has been our field of influence that we can only view it with awe. It has been, and is, a great destiny for this country to sway so mightily the destinies of the universe. But the great privilege involves a sacred trust. We must look to it that the fertile race we send forth to the waste places of the earth is a race, physically, morally, and intellectually equal to its high

duties. At present, we will not compel our children to be educated, however rudely; at present, in one of our cities nearly a quarter of the infants born die before they are one year old. In one of your sections you propose to discuss, "What are the best means of drawing together the interests of the United Kingdom, India, and the Colonies?" I submit that the primary means are to send forth colonists who may be worthy the country they leave and the destiny they seek.

The different agencies I have noted to-night all tend to this: Whether we keep them in England or they pass from us, we must look to the nurture of this race of kings. We annually distribute through the world a population nearly as large as that of Birmingham. In the last two years more emigrants have left our shores than there are inhabitants in Glasgow and Dundee put together. After all, whatever our commerce or political influence may be, this is the most gigantic enterprise in which this or any other nation can be engaged; and the responsibility for its success, not merely for the present, but for countless future generations, lies with us.

Will this great stream pass from us a turbid flood, composed of emigrants like some we now send forth, who shake the dust from their feet and swear undying enmity to us; or shall it be a broad and

beneficent river of life, fertilising as the Nile, beloved as the Ganges, sacred as the Jordan, separated from us indeed by the ocean, but like that fabled fountain Arethusa, which, passing under the sea from Greece into Sicily, retained its original source in Arcadia? We do not know what our fate may be. We have no right, perhaps, to hope that we may be an exception to the rule by which nations have their period of growth, and of grandeur, and of decay. It may be that all we most esteem may fade away like the glories of Babylon. But if we have done our duty well, even though our history should pass away, and our country become

"an island salt and bare,
The haunt of seals, and orcs, and seamews' clang,"

she may be remembered, not ungratefully, as the mother of great commonwealths and peaceful empires that shall perpetuate the best qualities of the race.

I have only mentioned one of the topics with which a social science congress is called upon to deal; yet how vast this single subject appears! Indeed, it is difficult to see any limit to the possible usefulness of a meeting like the present. We live in remarkable times—times of social development, so ominous that we may be approaching a period of social revolution. What a change from that old world whence this fertile brood of nations sprang!

On the one side, a dark surging mass of barbarians; on the other, the inevitable, stern immobility of the Roman Empire. Now, the whole universe seems undergoing the volcanic influence of social theory. Everywhere there is breaking out some strange manifestation. The grotesque congregation of the Shakers, the agricultural socialism of Harris, the polygamous socialism of Mormon, the lewd quackery of Free-love, the mad, blank misery of Nihilism, the tragic frenzy of the Parisian Commune, are portents no observer can neglect. Some try to solve the problem by abolishing property; some by a new religion. Most of these experiments thrive in America, which alone has room for such diversities of opinion and practice. It is too much the practice to treat these various organisations as a mixture of knavery and folly. Two, indeed, of these phases of humanity will receive more attention from the historian of the future than they attract from their contemporaries — I mean the Commune of Paris, and the Church of the Latter-day Saints. That eccentric church is a socialism founded on a polygamous religion, and ruled by a supreme pontiff. But it would be a mistake, I think, to suppose that polygamy is an essential part of Mormonism. The traveller in Utah will be struck most, not by the plurality of wives, but by the prevailing industry and apparent

external brotherhood. These are the outward features of an extraordinary community. That it should largely increase; that it should have converted a desert into a garden; that it should, in the last few years, have attracted to it thousands of the working classes (not by polygamy, for that is expensive, and almost all the emigrants are poor), will seem, to a future age, a strange sign of our times.

Again, whatever may be thought of the Commune of Paris, which issued quaintly ingenuous decrees, and which ended in blood and iron, it will always remain one of the sinister facts of our age. Like the Ninevite king, it perished in a blazing pyre of what was fairest in its habitation; and the world lost so much in those flames that it cannot now pass judgment with complete impartiality. But as a gigantic outbreak of class hostility, as a desperate attempt to found a new society in the very temple of the old, it has hardly, perhaps, received sufficient attention. Far be it from me to attempt to palliate the horrors of that disastrous conflict. They are, however, only terrible accessories. But the ominous fact of that sudden social revolution is a portent that cannot be blotted from the history of humanity. While human beings remain human beings, and while efforts like these are made for complete social reorganisation, a social

science congress has even more scope than a parliament. . . . Never was a league of the friends of humanity more needed than now. Never was there, on all sides, so much of energy and skill given to the preparation of those efforts by which civilisation is retarded, and mankind made miserable. The armies of the four great military powers, when on a war footing, engross three and a quarter millions of men in the prime and flower of life. Three and a quarter millions of men in four countries with their swords ready to the grindstone form a portentous, silent fact which we cannot ignore in the halls where we discuss the efficacy of arbitration in settling disputes between nations. In Spain we see a war of dynasty; in America a conflict of colour. The night is dark and troubled; we can but labour steadfastly, hoping for the dawn, united by the sympathy of the living, and animated by the example of the dead.

COMMERCE AND EMPIRE

At Leeds, 11th October 1888

I FEEL that you did me a great honour when you invited me to meet you, on this occasion, to receive the address with which you have just presented me. I well understand how great a compliment, as well as how great an advantage, it is for one in my position to be permitted to meet with the representatives of all parties in Leeds who are interested in all questions relating to commerce. When I look at your address I am inclined to think that what you put in the first front of it with regard to myself has a bearing of some importance. You allude to the time when I held the appointment of Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and I think that that reference, coming as it does from a non-political body, is one of some importance; for I believe this, that the more the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs is considered as a non-political officer, the better for the country. I have always held, and I hope I have proved by action and also by want of action, that my belief is, that

the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should speak whenever possible and as often as possible with the united voice of the English nation without distinction of party. I cannot help feeling that I am very incapable of making any reply to the honour you have done me. I cannot help feeling the want that so many of us in public life feel who have been educated as I have—the want of a practical commercial education which is so useful in the training of a public man. But I consider that this is a Chamber of Commerce, and I have very strong feelings with regard to the functions of a Chamber of Commerce. I hope you will allow me to mention a thought very much with me at the present time, and that is, I think that the Chambers of Commerce in this country, that ought to represent the commercial feelings of this country, are not aware of the political power they exercise,—I do not mean in a party sense,—and, not knowing it, they are not apt to exercise it as much as they ought to do. We should remember, after all, this great Empire, which is so great and legitimate a source of pride to us, and which, I think, offers great guarantees for the peace and the prosperity of the world at large, is mainly founded on commerce and character.

I do not, of course, on an occasion like this,

propose to enter into the various elements and causes of our national prosperity; but as regards commerce as an element in the formation and the conservation of the Empire, it is hardly necessary to speak either. If it had not been for our commerce—I am almost speaking a practical truism —we should scarcely have any colonies, or no colonies at all. Had it not been for our commerce we certainly should not have possessed the Empire of India. Had it not been for our commerce we should be limited to two islands in Europe, which have not always lived together on the most agreeable terms. I say, then, that commerce — the commerce of this country—is a power and interest which is so great and so supreme in its nature that I think it ought to exercise itself a little more in the contemplation and consideration of great national subjects, in which its voice ought to be more heard than it is. Now, let us take three different departments, into which, I suppose, all politics may be for these purposes divided. Take our domestic policy. It is, of course, a truism, a natural thing, that commercial men's Chambers of Commerce should be mainly interested in the financial policy of the country; but since the adoption of free trade in this country our financial policy does not afford any great subject of anxiety to the commercial interest at

large, and but for the annual Budget, which hangs like the sword of Damocles over the head of that commercial community, they would not need to disturb themselves about financial policy at all. Free trade, moreover, has so regulated the direction in which that sword is likely to fall that it may almost, to a certainty, be predicted what line it is likely to take. But, besides financial policy, surely there are many subjects of domestic policy in which the voice of commerce ought to be almost paramount. You have named some of them in this address—the appointment of a Minister of Commerce, the codification and amendment of the law relating to private partnerships, including the registration of firms, the extension of our County Court jurisdiction, the progress made in technical education, and so forth. And there is another matter as to which I think the voice of the commercial community as expressed through their Chambers of Commerce should be heard with no uncertain sound. I mean private bill legislation, which is a matter which directly affects the commercial classes of this country, and on which, I think, they should make their voice and opinions heard. But, going beyond what I may call strictly commercial questions, surely the voice of your Chambers could be heard on other topics of even more imperial interest. What class of the

community is so much interested in the value and efficiency of our fleet as the commercial interest? We hear daily discussions carried on by great experts with regard to the value and efficiency of our fleet. Well, I am not an expert, and I am wholly incompetent to judge as to which side is in the right; but the stake we have in this question is so large, the commercial stake in this question is so enormous, that I cannot understand why we do not hear authoritatively the views of the commercial classes, through their Chambers of Commerce giving their opinion, backed up by their knowledge of mercantile affairs, with regard to the capacity of our fleet to undertake what may be laid upon it. We have had naval manœuvres lately, and I dare say those naval manœuvres have proved many things. I do not think they have proved to us very conclusively the ability of our fleet to do what it has to do; but, unless one knows as a naval man naval affairs, I do not think one can pronounce authoritatively about these matters. But if every Chamber of Commerce in the country realised what this question means,—that it means the existence of our trade in the case of war, and on the existence of our trade depends our existence as a nation,—I do think that they would feel bound to examine into this matter as carefully as possible, and to

give their opposition or support to any naval policy they might think deserving of it. Let us pass that by.

Let us pass to the region of foreign policy; and when we come to the region of foreign policy we come at once to a question which is more or less one of detail. I mean the question of the commercial reports of Her Majesty's consuls, to which allusion has been made in the address. I am glad to hear that these reports, which have been issued in the last two or three years, and which have shown a marked advance both in the exactness and copiousness of their information and the promptitude with which they have been issued, have met with your approval to a very large extent; but I confess I have been a little disappointed in one important matter connected with these reports. I see on high and adequate authority that these reports are of much more use to our competitors in trade than to ourselves. I see that what we are doing in furnishing with the utmost expedition the most accurate reports from the best possible sources of information is not so much to develop our own trade as to give hints to our competitors as to how they may compete with us. I must say that is not a satisfactory state of things to our communities here. I do not think it is satisfactory that we should be told that any

continental nation makes use of our information with more speed than we do ourselves; but does it not raise a further question with regard to these reports? If it be true that we are not so speedy in availing ourselves of them as we ought to be it does raise the point whether it might not be well for the Secretary of State to furnish early copies of those reports confidentially to Chamber of Commerce before they are generally issued to the public. This would give information to our commercial community which, as I think, they are fairly entitled to possess, and I think it is worthy of the attention of your Chamber whether some such course as this should not be urged upon the Government. There is another point with regard to our diplomatic service in its commercial relations, as to which many representations have been made to various Governments, and that is that our consuls abroad ought to aim at promoting the British commercial firms of the towns in which they live. I know it is said that in the East and elsewhere the consuls of other nations take a very ardent and personal part in pushing the interests of the firms belonging to their respective countries and it is said that our consuls ought to take a similar attitude with regard to our commercial firms in this country. I am not at all sure of the wisdom, of the validity, of this contention.

admit that at certain Courts where foreign and commercial policy are inseparably entwined it may be well for our representatives to put forward the claim of our commerce as a national whole, but I am very doubtful as to the expediency of their making representations on behalf of particular firms. If our consular or diplomatic agents were instructed to take such a course as that, they would be placed in a very invidious position. Suppose that three firms, competing in the same trade, all asked the consul to use his particular influence on their behalf. His position would at once become impossible, and you must remember, besides, that it is very difficult for the consul, under such circumstances, when he is serving the interests of a particular firm, not to be liable to charges which, I trust, would be unfounded, of some commercial interest of his own being forwarded by the firm in question. I think you would find it very difficult, when you come to practice, to maintain our consuls and diplomatic agents in the high, independent, and unsullied position which they possess, if you once gave them instructions to push the interests of a particular firm or trade.

But there are larger questions of foreign policy to which I wish the attention of Chambers of Commerce could be more particularly directed. A

very great change has come over the whole of our foreign policy in the last twenty years, and I think you will see a much greater change in it in the next twenty years. Our foreign policy has become more of a colonial policy, and is becoming every day more entwined with our colonial interests than has ever been the case before. Formerly our foreign policy was mainly an Indian policy; it was mainly guided by considerations of what was best for our Indian Empire. That brought us into many complications which we might otherwise have avoided, but which we felt were rightly undertaken to save so splendid a possession; but owing to causes which I will point out to you, the colonial influence must necessarily overshadow our foreign policy. In the first place, our colonial communities are rising to a pitch of power and influence which makes it natural for us to listen to them whenever they make representations on their own behalf—and they do make constant representations on their own behalf. In the next place we find that the other Powers are beginning a career of colonial aggrandisement. We formerly should not have in our foreign affairs to trouble ourselves with colonial questions, because we had a monopoly of colonies. That monopoly has ceased; but consider for a moment, as matters stand now, how largely our foreign policy is a

colonial policy. In America our principal questior of foreign policy at this moment may be said tc be the fisheries dispute between Canada and the United States. It is difficult for some of us—it is difficult at anyrate for myself—to consider the United States as a foreign Power, and the Unitec States in these colonial questions have interest totally different from ours or those of Canada, anc in dealing with Canadian questions it is quite clea that the voice of Canada must sound very loud in the counsels of the Foreign Office. If you look a little farther you find a constant source of irritatior in Newfoundland in regard to the fishery question which rendered it impossible to ratify a convention made on the subject with the United States, anc that showed them the extent to which the colonial policy had become foreign policy. When you look at Africa you find the same condition o things, and if you look at the map you will finc the country is practically apportioned to one Power or another, and this means that, instead o your policy there being an insular foreign policy you are now a Power with boundaries adjoining those of three or four European States in the continent of Africa. We pass now to Asia, we pass to Thibet, to the trade with which you have alluded. I confess I am in favour of a peacefu solution of that question, of the extension o

commerce by carrying it forward peacefully and not by force of arms. But in Asia, again, we do not find ourselves free from this colonial trouble elsewhere. France has got a great territory there. We are almost adjacent to French territory in Asia, which again makes us a coterminous Power with France, where we did not expect to be. Pass on to Australia. In the Pacific you have two spheres of influence, of England and Germany, as accurately marked out as the division between Yorkshire and Lancashire. You are a coterminous Power with Germany in the Pacific. In questions relating to the Pacific, the voice of your colonial community in Australia must be loudly heard, and the voice of Australia indeed must be given effect to, and it must be paramount in the counsels of the Foreign Office with regard to those questions. Take another instance of what I mean. The two questions which we had to regulate with Germany in 1886, at anyrate, were questions relating to Zanzibar and Samoa. The question relating to the colonial development of Germany is quite outside European diplomacy. When you come to approach almost every foreign question at this moment you find the colonial interest inseparable, and in future your colonial policy must be a preponderating factor in your foreign policy as well.

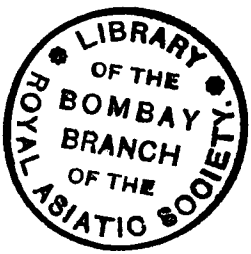
That leads me to another point of our policy, one which I think Chambers of Commerce should assist in forming public opinion. I have said that foreign policy in the future will be very largely concerned, and is very largely concerned, with questions of colonial policy, but that raises the question of whether you wish to have a colonial policy at all. There was at one time in this country a very great demand, founded on the belief that our colonies were not trading as well with us as they do now, to be free from the responsibility of a Colonial Empire. I think that demand has, to a great extent, ceased, but the people of this country will, in a not too distant time, have to make up their minds what footing they wish their colonies to occupy with respect to them, or whether they desire their colonies to leave them altogether. It is, as I believe, absolutely impossible for you to maintain in the long-run your present loose and indefinable relations to your colonies, and preserve those colonies as parts of the Empire. That is a question as to which Chambers of Commerce ought to be able to make up their minds very definitely, because, in the first place, it is a commercial question. I do not believe that if our colonies left us in that amicable spirit in which they tell us they might leave us—I do not believe that if they left us in however amicable a spirit, you would find

them as good customers as they are now. We have an opportunity of comparing our relations between a colony that has left us and the colonies that remain with us—when I speak of a colony that has left us, I mean, of course, the United States. The United States have taken from us during the last ten years an average of £24,350,000 of home produce. Their population is nearly 60,000,000, and therefore they have taken off our home produce at the rate of about 8s. per head. Now Canada, which, as you all know, is coterminous with the United States, and which remains to us, has taken from us on an average £7,300,000 during the last ten years. Take their population at 5,000,000, and that gives nearly 30s. per head, or nearly three times and a half what the United States take from us. You may say that the United States have a more hostile tariff against us than Canada has; but, if you think for a moment, you will remember that if Canada were to leave us she would be pretty certain to adopt the tariff of the United States, and we should not be materially benefited by that proceeding. But let us take our other great colony abroad. Let us take the case of Australia. Australia takes from us on an average 24¼ millions, or about the same as the whole of the United States, though its population is only about 3¼ millions, or at the rate of £7 a head,

being more than seventeen times more than the United States with its population of sixty millions. I wish to say that, on that ground of commercial interest alone, the question is worthy of the consideration of our great commercial communities. I do not think it receives the consideration it deserves, for this reason, the question of the retention of our colonies may be opened upon us at any moment by some unforeseen incident. I think I know enough of public opinion in this country to know that it matures slowly, and I believe the Chambers of Commerce in this country would be performing a useful task if they made up their minds to mature public opinion on this question. They might come to a conclusion different from that at which I have arrived; but at anyrate, whatever it is, it is well that the Chambers of Commerce of this country should know what their mind is, and should make that mind known. You must remember what it involves. It is not merely commercial interests that are involved; it is a narrowing down of this country to its European possessions. Do not flatter yourselves that if Canada and Australia were to leave you, you would retain your smaller colonies. The West Indies would go with Canada; Australia would take in Australasia. As to the Cape, I think you might make up your minds for the secession of

the Cape under circumstances such as those. Well, if you wish to remain alone in the world with Ireland you can do so. I do not see that you can obtain the great boon of a peaceful Empire, encircling the globe with a bond of commercial unity and peace, without some sacrifice on your part. No great benefit—no such benefit as that can be obtained without a sacrifice. You will have, as I think, to admit the colonies to a much larger share in your affairs than you do at present. You will have to give them a right to prompt the voice of England when it speaks abroad to a much greater extent than you do at present. You must be prepared for demands, sometimes unreasonable, such as spoiled children sometimes make. You must be prepared in some respects to diminish your own insular freedom of action on behalf of your giant offspring abroad. But to my mind the sacrifice is worth it. The cause which we call Imperial Federation, for want of a better name, is worthy, not merely of the attention of Chambers of Commerce, but of the devotion of the individual rights of the people of this country. For my part, if you will forgive me this little bit of egotism, I can say from the bottom of my heart that it is the dominant passion of my public life. Ever since I traversed those great regions which own the sway of the British Crown outside these islands, I have

felt that there was a cause which merited all the enthusiasm and energy that man could give to it. It is a cause for which anyone might be content to live; it is a cause for which, if needs be, anyone might be content to die.



HEREDITARY LEGISLATORS

At a Trades-House Banquet, Glasgow,
8th October 1890

I SEE around me many guilds and many deacons. I have never seen so many gold chains in my life; but there is one important guild not unrepresented here which entirely wants its deacon. I mean the guild of politicians. If we had that deacon, who, I suppose, would, under present circumstances, belong to the House of Lords, and would be Lord Salisbury, we should be relieved of all difficulty as to the proper person to reply to this toast. I do not feel adequate, for more than one reason, to do justice to it. My hon. friend on my right [Sir Archibald Orr Ewing] places me in some embarrassment, because I feel that he is much more fitted to return thanks for both Houses of Parliament than myself. He places me in some embarrassment because I am conscious that some of my political friends have done their best to prevent his having the privilege of returning thanks even for the House of Commons, but, in

spite of the vast superiority of their political principles, it has always been found at the last moment that the popularity of Sir Archibald Orr Ewing has enabled him to land himself at the head of the poll. That has not caused any serious discrepancy between my hon. friend and myself, though it causes me a trifling feeling of personal embarrassment. But as regards the capacity for returning thanks for Parliament as a whole, I yield entirely to my hon. friend, and the reason has been delicately hinted at by the hon. gentleman who so eloquently and skilfully proposed this toast. It is this, that whereas your hon. baronet has one foot firmly planted in the House of Commons, he has also, if we may trust that journalistic inspiration to which I for one yield implicit credence, at least one foot in that more august and tranquil assembly to which I have the honour to belong. I do not use any flattery to my hon. friend when I say that I would much rather see him in the House of Lords than the House of Commons.

Mr. Deacon Convener, when I come to compare my own claims they sink into insignificance. I have not had much to do for the last two years with the House of Lords, because I have been absent from it, engaged in the duties of a less tranquil assembly. I have at other times, in

former days, when the rose of youth was still florid upon me—I have, I say, in other days offered vainly schemes of reform to the House of Lords. The last scheme of reform which was offered to the House of Lords by one of its own members was proposed last session. It was to the effect that absentees from the House of Lords should be expelled from its assembly, and I came to the conclusion, after attentively considering that proposal with the number of attendances which I had been able to give, that the first effect of it would be to land me outside the House of Lords. I have always considered that in the toast of the House of Commons and the House of Lords there is far more interest given to the House of Lords than to the other branch of the service. There is little interest taken in the House of Commons now that its members have taken to going to bed like other people. They are in so very different a position from ourselves that we view them with a sort of almost contemptuous compassion. They are both far from well, but if we may compare their respective conditions, they would be like two patients in a hospital on adjoining beds, one suffering from an impending attack of apoplexy and the other in a fit of confirmed atrophy. The House of Commons is always supplied with a great superfluity of legisla-

tive food which it can neither assimilate nor digest, and through which it appears to me to be likely to suffer from an approaching fit of apoplexy which may involve its not remote dissolution. On the other hand, the House of Lords, pining for work, capable of work, with intellects from the youngest peer who has just come of age to that of Prime Minister, these sit expectant for some work to be given to them. They sit sharpening their legislative teeth, but no food is given them to masticate. Now, it was in these circumstances that I, in that youthful moment or youthful moments, offered two proposals for the reform of the House of Lords. I do not know if either will ever be adopted, but I am convinced of this, speaking in the most serious spirit, that the condition of the House of Lords, and the future of the House of Lords, is one which politicians of both parties cannot regard altogether without concern. I say this frankly and freely, because I have been supported in those proposals by as many men of one party as of the other.

The dangers, to my mind, to the House of Lords—at anyrate, the more immediate dangers—are twofold. One is, that it has by constitutional precedent a claim to constitutional equality with the House of Commons, which it is impossible

altogether to sustain. The other is, that men become members of the House of Lords against their will and without their option. The first case has this great disadvantage — that it presupposes a condition of things which actually does not exist, and when you have a non-natural condition of things in a constitution you are placed in a position of some peril. I think, gentlemen, that the history of England has been one of political apathy varied with political paroxysm. The political apathy lasts a certain number of years, the political paroxysm follows, and I am always apprehensive that any revision of the House of Lords, which I believe at this moment is demanded by both parties, may take place, not at a moment of political apathy, but at a moment of political paroxysm. As regards the other point that I have ventured to lay before you, the compulsory entrance of persons into the House of Lords whether they like it or not, has this result, that many young men go into the House of Lords, and are disgusted and repelled by the coldness of the House, and by its legislative methods. There being no business before the House, there is not the same attraction for attendance, the debates are languid and often exceedingly unattractive; and the result is that many young men, who if they had been allowed to enter the House of

Commons at once would have led useful and attractive political lives, are retiring from political life altogether. Now, these are the two conditions of the House of Lords, the only two to which I shall refer. They are two which, in my opinion, do not trench even remotely on party politics, but which I thought it due to this assembly to take the opportunity of putting before you. I for one shall never flag in my hopes of reforming the House of Lords, in making it a part of the Constitution, more active and more useful, and in that effort I hope I shall receive the prospective assistance of those who may hereafter be elevated to that House.

SOCIAL PROBLEMS

On receiving the Freedom of Glasgow,
10th October 1890

MY LORD PROVOST, Magistrates, and Fellow-Citizens of Glasgow,—I have to tender to you my most heartfelt thanks for the signal honour which you have done me in admitting me to your suffrage; for the terms in which the resolution has been couched; for the words in which you have been pleased to recommend it; and last, and not least, for the magnificent casket, which will last as a permanent memorial for me and mine. My Lord, you have dwelt on great and searching questions in your speech. They are of a nature, of a comprehensiveness, that might occupy some twenty or thirty speeches, even if I were inclined to follow you in that region. But I could not hope to treat them in the same space or with the power with which your Lordship has dealt with them. I will rest my claim on no such weighty grounds to-day. I will only say this one word about myself, and it is this—that I claim to

love my country, Scotland, in particular, but the Empire at large. That is so small a merit that I believe it can be claimed for every person present, and if I were to rest on that as my hope of obtaining a burgess-ship of Glasgow, it would be necessary for the corporation to be ready to distribute such tickets to every person in this hall. I accept this ticket on behalf of you all, for I do not acknowledge any greater claim than anybody present.

But I would further say on behalf of us all that our devotion to Scotland is not in any degree a merit, but it rather enhances our devotion to that great united Empire of which we are part. I know it used to be said in the days of James I. and George III. that Scotchmen wanted a little more than their share of the Empire. I do not think that that is fairly applicable now, but we want our share to be a good one. For my part, to borrow a metaphor from a popular comparison which is familiar to most of you, I would refer to those garden shows which are constantly held in rural localities, where prizes are given for the best and brightest garden. Well, we want Scotland to be the best and brightest garden in the Empire. But, my Lord, if we wish that, we must put our shoulders to the wheel, and it does not seem an unnatural contention to urge on such an occasion

as this that one of the best ways of furthering that object is to take an active part in local and in municipal affairs. Now, you have alluded, my Lord, in terms far too kind, to my connection with a great municipal council in the south. But I hold and believe, gentlemen, that in the not remote future, people who are ambitious of being of service to the public at large will not very readily find municipal life behind parliamentary life, and in some respects they may be inclined to prefer it. I know there used to be a cheap sneer at municipal matters by calling them "parochial." I suppose I have what one of your more eminent burgesses, Lord Beaconsfield, used to call a "parochial mind." But my belief is that every day that passes over us the great municipalities of this country, ay, and even those more recent local organisations which are called county councils, are growing in power, in influence, and in majesty. Their offices are daily more coveted, their honours daily more cherished, and their work expands every hour in usefulness and benefit to the country at large. I think I am not saying too much when I say that the time is not remote when men who wish to do the public service will prefer even to do it in municipal rather than parliamentary life. And I think so for this reason — that in the practical work which you do in municipal life

you get a more immediate return for it than you do in Parliament. A politician's life is apt to be spent in futile action and barren criticism. But you, on your side, if you embark in the council of the town to which you belong, have the opportunity of seeing your work ready to your hand, fruitful around you. What you are able to effect you see achieved at once, and you see the results in the increased beauty of your city and in the increased welfare and happiness of your neighbours and surroundings. As we know, politicians, on the other hand, with the highest aims and objects before them, often have to wait for their lifetime, and not even to see in their lifetime the object realised after which they seek.

I would venture to put a further argument before you, and it is this—that you have in local affairs the advantage of being able to concentrate your mind on one or two subjects, whereas what is called popularly a statesman lives in the maelstrom or whirlpool of various questions, all sucking at him in different courses, and he is ignorant to which to give the precedence. I think your own city furnishes a very striking example of what I am saying. Suppose a Glasgow man had been interested in that great question which is coming so home to us—the dwellings of the poorer classes of Great Britain. Let us suppose he had the

opportunity at the same time of entering the council of this city or of entering the House of Commons. If he had chosen the great and illustrious body he might have had the six-hundredth or the seven-hundredth part in passing a general Act which has not been of a very large application, whereas if he had joined the council he would have been able to take part in those great works for the lodging of the working men which have given Glasgow such a pre-eminence among the principal cities of this country. I say that is one of the numerous instances, but it is one of more general application. The truth is that every community in these days has its happiness and its welfare more and more within its own control. All that which concerns the physical welfare and comfort of the community at large is, in the main, in the control of the community itself. What are the primary wants of man? Food, pure air, pure water, and a sound and decent dwelling. As to food, I do not suppose food can be provided except under provisions of the Poor Law, but we must not forget that the great national genius, Dr. Chalmers, was able to work in this very city a system by which, without aid from public legislation or public taxes, he was able to relieve and give food to all the destitute in his great parish. Take pure air. Do not suppose that in this damp

and melancholy climate it is possible to give the air we could wish for in a great city. But I do not know that the last word has been said as to fog and as to smoke, and in the meantime much can be done by a careful attention to the widening of streets and to the heights of houses, an attention which is given, I believe, with great care in this city under the vigilance of your Dean of Guild, ex-Provost Ure. And, as regards decent dwellings, I have pointed out what Glasgow has already been able to effect. I say this, that, as regards your first material wants, Parliament now touches you little, or rather touches you little with one material qualification. The fact is that men daily look for help less to Westminster and more to themselves. Now, my Lord Provost, what is the qualification to which I allude? It is this, that, if you have to exercise your powers as you wish, you have constantly to go to Parliament for a private Bill. Now, a private Bill is a public nuisance. You go to London; you spend a great deal of money; and, by the bye, one of the minor disadvantages of the system is this — that malignant tongues endeavour to prove that the city sages when they go to London do not go so much for the public weal as for their own private indulgence, whereas I, who haunt the lobbies of Parliament, can tell you a very different tale. You spend a great deal

of money, and you very often bring back nothing but lawyers' bills to your discontented constituents. I myself have had the honour of fighting your battle with regard to your boundaries as an unpaid advocate in the House of Lords. I was there defeated by an overwhelming majority, which was certainly indifferent and, I think, extremely ignorant of the circumstances. The fact is, I firmly believe that nothing in legislation touches Scotland so much as the removal of private Bill inquiries to the country itself, to a tribunal which is really conversant with the interests of the locality, with our own law, our own usage, and our own history.

My Lord Provost, this is a digression. My object is to point out the increasing importance of municipal as compared with parliamentary life. Parliament is an august assembly. It is a great and noble being. Like an elephant, it claims the privilege of picking up beams or picking up pins with equal facility, and I think it prefers picking up pins. But when you come to think of it, there does seem some advantage in the administration of the municipal council as compared with so august a body as Parliament. We may leave the other assembly out of sight for a moment. The House of Commons consists of 670 members, a number ill-fitted for the transaction of business. I

do not know, my Lord Provost, that you would like to see your town council increased to 670 members. I do not think there would be many freedoms conferred, or, at anyrate, there would not be much approach to unanimity in their conferences. But with regard to that particular we may at least say this—that they are landed in this very difficult dilemma. If the members are not to speak, it is difficult to see why they are sent to Westminster, and if they are to speak, it is difficult to see how they are to do any business. But let us leave Parliament alone and drop that comparison, which may lead me into a court resembling the Star Chamber. Might we not look to municipal life in itself, without comparison at all, to satisfy the most exacting and the most exalted ambition? Is there not enough in Glasgow at present, in the administration of Glasgow itself, to satisfy the ambition of all but the wildest among you? You have an enormous population, the population of a kingdom a century ago; you have your great, and I suppose unbounded, wealth; you have your harbour, which can accommodate the shipping of the world; you have your tramways, partly within your control, and soon, I suppose, to be wholly within your control; you have your historic and famous university; you have your great system of police; you have your fire brigade; you

have your army of volunteers; you have your commercial fleets, and an unbounded capacity for building any number more—your fleets of which the most recent triumph has been the temporary defeat of the fiscal legislation of our friends in the United States in a race by fifty seconds. Beyond that you have your parliament of town councillors, your cabinet of bailies, and your highest constitutional authority, the Lord Provost.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, what I ask is this: What can the State give you more than the municipality of Glasgow gives you in this comparatively small compass? But I will add one more argument to those I have put before you, and it is this. Even granting that what you have is great, what you are to have is incalculably more so. Remember this, politics of the present, and still more politics of the future, are the politics of the poor. We, in the future, I hope, are not likely because of that to dismiss or to neglect our imperial duties, but we shall have to take care of those upon whom these imperial duties devolve. We shall not forget the crown of the edifice because we examine more closely its base and foundation. Parliament, if it is to deal with social questions—and it must deal with social questions—will have to deal with them, not by centralisation, but by decentralisation. But

that general progress of decentralisation already so much in vogue will add largely to the powers of municipalities like this. But while dealing with the social problems it will increase necessarily your powers. You will find that these social problems will wax greater in your hands. It is not merely that the town council can set an example, which is almost a compulsory example, in the considerate treatment of those who labour for them. I am not even alluding to those great battles — battles unhappily now so frequent — between labour and capital, as to which we can only hope that they are leading to a surer, to a safer, and more permanent condition in their respective directions. I believe that even there municipalities will be called upon to intervene and arbitrate much more largely than we have done in the past. But I am speaking of the permanent social problem which is always with us, which affects us more and more as our civilisation becomes more advanced, and which at this moment is about to be grappled with by a great force and a wonderful man, Mr. Booth, of the Salvation Army; I mean the condition sometimes called our unemployed and sometimes our homeless poor; but, by whatever term you may call them, the residuum of the population. I do not wish to speak of this in my own language. I can recall

to you the language of a far greater than I am, for it seems to me that it was in this hall, and it certainly was in this very city, that John Bright described to a Glasgow audience, with all the moving cadences of his matchless voice, the thousands, the generations, the nations of armed men that he seemed to see proceeding in one unending procession from the cradle to the grave—from the cradle that nurtured them to be soldiers, to the grave prepared for them by war.

We live in times of peace, thank God; but do we not in this daylight still see a procession, not lessening, and not less piteous than that—a procession of those who seem to be doomed to crime, steeped in crime, born to crime? We see some who, if we may judge of their condition outwardly, would appear—to borrow a theological doctrine which I dare not characterise—to be predestinated to a life of misery and barbarism. We see honesty without work, and work under conditions almost more cruel than death, work in which sixteen, seventeen, eighteen hours a day are given up to the taskmaster, and six reserved for home. What a home! A passing phantom, a family that the husband and the father can never hope to see or know. These things exist. They are in process of diminution, as I believe. Public attention, whenever it is called to them, has this mighty effect in

this country—that it says that these things shall not be. But you have, besides that, even a more hopeless class—the siftings of some higher social condition, lacking both manual skill, and even bodily strength, all thronging the gates of labour, and, when the gates of labour are shut, who have nothing to do but to starve. While this is so, there is ample work for city councils and county councils, as well as for parliaments and churches. I am not seeking to ignore the fact that the higher path is in the larger statesmanship. But to how many can the term of statesman be, in comprehensive charity of phrase, applied? There is this in the municipal work—that it requires tools of less exquisite temper, that it lies at our doors, that it stands in our path, that we cannot avoid it even if we would. Besides it has an excellency of dignity, and an excellencey of power; but it has more. It has the excellency of work. I hope, my Lord Provost, that these few remarks on this most important of subjects from your youngest burgess, spoken under the shadow and countenance of a municipality which I may—and it is no flattery—call a model, may not be deemed out of place, especially as they are spoken at the moment of receiving the privilege which enables me, under your august authority, to enrol myself as a citizen of Glasgow. I am one of those who think that

there are no greater honours that can be conferred or received, than those popular freedoms given by the voice of a great municipality, whether to deserving or to undeserving people. There is no freedom which anybody who values these distinctions can value more than that of the city of Glasgow. But I must mention that there has been a material change in that respect. If you read a well-known romance written by an eminent Scotchman, and published about the middle of the last century — I mean *Roderick Random* — you will find that in those days the freedom of Glasgow was not so highly esteemed as it is now. I do not know whether it was a wild flight of the writer of fiction, or whether it was some private spite conceived against Glasgow by Smollett in the days of his youthful education here, but he depicts the hero of the story returning in prosperity to his family estates, and remaining at Glasgow over the night. He says, "That night we had intimation that the provost and magistrates, hearing of our good fortune, determined to wait upon us to-morrow, and offer to my father the freedom of the city. My father took the proper course with regard to such a complaisance," — what that expression means I hardly know,—"and we left by the first coach in the morning so as to avoid the ceremony." I leave by an early train this afternoon, but I

cannot be liable to the reproach of leaving by an early train in order to avoid the honour of the freedom of your city. After all, my Lord, it seems to me that these are really the greatest and truest honours that can await any public man, however great his aspirations may be. I would take a great man, Richard Cobden. I do not know whether he was one of your burgesses, but we know that he never enjoyed office, though his political career was one of the most influential in the country, and that he could hope for no present fame, or no present gratification which would equal in distinction the freedom of a great city like yours. I take another case, an older case. It is the case of a man who, I should think, was one of your freemen. When he was a Minister he never arrived at that inner cabinet, which in Glasgow is typified by the magistracy, and which in politics is typified by the Cabinet. I mean Edmund Burke. Edmund Burke was rector of your university. I cannot doubt that he had not time, even in those random times, to escape the freedom of the corporation of Glasgow. I take it that his distinction in those days was to receive the voice of popular approval, whether conveyed by the freedom or otherwise.

My Lord, it did seem possible at one time that this honour might have come to me less as an individual than as one representing the first city of

the Empire, and so receiving honour from the second. I have not terminated my connection with the London County Council, but I have ceased to be its chairman, and I could not help, as I walked through this splendid palace this morning, feeling the remoter pangs of envy that might well be experienced by a London county councillor in visiting Glasgow. I rejoice, indeed, that I am no longer chairman, for this reason — that some of you must have been inclined to pay me a return visit at my late office in Spring Gardens. I do not think you would have recognised a place to be compared with Glasgow in the premises we occupy there. However, we do not complain. We consider that we have to earn our premises as you have earned yours. You have a long history, and long traditions and great achievements behind you, and an ancient population to govern. We are the children of yesterday, as yet hardly recognised, and we can only hope in time to earn some decent accommodation in which we may breathe an air which is not poisonous, and have elbow room in which to discharge our municipal functions. I was not afraid to-day to urge upon the population of Glasgow the importance of municipal functions, because they have their importance put before them in a substantial way by this magnificent palace in which we are met to-day. I could not

have made the same speech in London, because there is nothing there to appeal to the eyes of Londoners, to make them understand by corporate presence the importance of their work, and they would have had to be conducted, if they had to be shown the place to which I wish to direct their ambition, to something very like the slum of a large town. Well, my Lord, you have reminded me that the hour is pressing on, and I will not further detain you. I do not know what the privileges are which your burgess ticket has conferred upon me, but I shall be greatly surprised if, in my experience of its enjoyment, I find that it can add in any degree to the affection, the loyal affection, I have always felt for the city of Glasgow, and to my gratitude to your great city for the affectionate greetings it has always given me.

FREE LIBRARIES AND CHEAP LITERATURE

Address on inaugurating a New Library at Whitechapel, on 25th October 1892

I CANNOT help being struck by the contrast between the occasion to-day and the last meeting that I attended in Whitechapel. That was an electoral meeting. Everything was at fever heat; the crowd bulged against the platform, and had to be diverted into the open space outside for fear some accident should occur. You would have thought then that the country would go to pieces if one set of men were elected, and could only find salvation if the other set of men were elected. But after that fever and fret, public opinion usually falls into a very languid state of health, and we meet under the apathy produced by the reaction after the general election. After a general election, after the fever, public opinion usually requires to be wheeled about in a bath chair. Its knocker is tied up; it speaks in a whisper under the prostration of its nervous system; and

sometimes it makes an expedition and goes altogether abroad.

But what I always think is, perhaps, the most striking feature of our life in this country is this —that we have under the storms and turmoils of our political controversies a municipal life always silently proceeding, which is absolutely untouched and unaffected by the storms and strifes of parties. I believe that if there is one great safeguard to which we may look in the future of our country, it is this—that if by any chance party politics should become a mere scene of violence and corruption, slander and malignity, you have always below and beyond that a perfectly safe and solid substratum of public municipal life on which you may fall back, at anyrate, if I may say so without confusion of metaphor, as your second line of defence. While your orators are banging tables and calling each other every kind of name, the municipal authorities go on providing gas, and water, and pavements for their streets, free public libraries, and public baths and washhouses, and do not care one farthing about those conflicts that are going on. In the same way, you, during all the stormy times to which I have alluded, brought this climax of your municipal life to its perfection, and made the best of all centres for this district of Whitechapel in this

public library. I attribute, as I have said, very great importance to the municipal life of this country; but London up till a very few years ago had, if I may say so, no municipal life, no municipal spirit at all, and it has been only within the last four or five years that a spirit has come and bid these dry bones live. To what is it that we owe this sudden revival, this sudden life of London? In the first place, I think we owe it largely to the London County Council. I think that great body, gathered together from every part of London to deliberate over the affairs of London, made London for the first time a unit. Then I think the great movements of the masses of late years have done much to breathe a sense of unity into London, because the unity of trade and the unity of callings are sure foundations on which to build municipal or national unity. Then, again, we have been welded together to a great extent by the arduous exertions of the churches in London. To them we owe much in this great task. We owe much to the writers—to men like Mr. Besant, who has raised an interest in the East End of London in many quarters where it did not exist before. And, lastly — I do not know whether it is the cause of municipal life, or whether it is the effect of municipal life—we owe a great deal to the benefactors of London,

to men like Mr. Passmore Edwards. You have heard from your chairman to-night how it was that, having collected a certain sum of money, and being at the last gasp as to how to collect the rest, you sent an emissary to Mr. Passmore Edwards, knowing his large public spirit; and instead of giving you the sum you wanted he gave you the whole cost of the building, and a thousand volumes of books besides. But he has given so many thousands of books in London that I do not think it necessary to mention that fact on this occasion. And, if I may say so, he raised and dignified his gift by the way in which he made it. There were no pompous paragraphs, no florid articles, no blowing of trumpets and beating of drums; he sent a note and a cheque, and the note has in it so remarkable a sentence that I ask the permission of the recipient to quote it to this meeting: "I cheerfully comply with your request, and relieve you of the difficulty which presses upon you, by paying the entire cost as specified in your letter—namely, £6454. I do this, not merely from a sense of duty, but because I think it is a distinguishing privilege to assist in lightening and brightening the lot of our East End fellow-citizens." In another note he says: "I have long felt that the East End of London has stupenduous uncancelled claims on

the wealthy and well-to-do people of the West End of London, and it affords me unalloyed gratification that I am enabled to wipe out a small portion of our moral indebtedness." Acts and language like that find an echo in all hearts, and we know that this is by no means the only act that Mr. Edwards has done of this kind. He has been in Bethnal Green; he has been at the Borough Road Polytechnic that I opened the other day,—I do not know whether he ventured to smoke on that occasion or not,—and he is strongly under suspicion of having been in Battersea lately, and gone to see the Albert Palace. In fact, wherever he goes, the suspicion of benevolence dogs his steps.

What are the uses of these free libraries? In these days the cheapness of books is so great that it can hardly be said that free or public libraries are so essentially necessary for the mere primitive purpose of reading as they would have been thirty or forty years ago. But they have a stimulating effect on the public that has not yet felt the slightest incitement to read, which is, in my opinion, the greatest benefit that they can confer; and in the second place, they have this further advantage, that as the appetite comes in eating, and as the lion that has once tasted blood is anxious for more, so the reader who has got

beyond his own library, and has had new lines of thought marked out for him by what he has read, cannot hope to follow that up with satisfaction except by entering a public library. But I do not think, upon the whole, that we must consider the diffusion of books is now in any degree limited to the public libraries among us. I think there is nothing so striking as the fact that you can get almost all the great works of the human mind for so very small a sum. You can get half the masterpieces of intellectual production, you can get half the masterpieces of literature, at about 3d. a piece. I asked a friend of mine to draw out a list for me of what was the lowest price at which you can get some of the great names of literature. You can get the whole of Shakespeare for 9d.; the whole of Milton's poetry for 9d.; you can get Bacon's essays for 3d.; Macaulay's *England* for 4s., his *Critical and Historical Essays* for 2s., with his *Lays of Ancient Rome* for 2s.; and you can get his *Miscellaneous Writings and Speeches* for the same sum. You can get almost the whole of Dickens at 4½d. per volume. Just fancy what it is to be able to get *Pickwick* for 4½d.! You can get every one of the *Waverley Novels* at 4½d. per volume. The fact is that now, for the price of a hat, you may get a library that all the merchant princes of the Middle Ages—all

the Fuggers and the Medicis—could not have obtained had they given their hearts' blood for it. I regard that as a very priceless fact in these days, because, after all, whether you read your books in a public library or whether you give 4d. for them and read them at home, they must have the influences upon you which Mr. Barnett has indicated. One influence he has not indicated, and therefore I will venture to touch on it.

It seems to me that books are the great democratic agent of the world. You hear of many democratic agencies—you have heard, for instance, of the invention of gunpowder, and how it destroyed chivalry and swept away the knights in armour and the aristocracy of war. The invention of gunpowder had that levelling effect on the battles of the Middle Ages. The invention of printing has worked more slowly, but not less effectually. It has worked more slowly because, in the first place, it only brought the learning out of the monasteries in which it was secluded into the palaces of the great. It brought it from the palaces of the great to the central places of learning as they existed in this country; but it has taken a long and a weary time—though that time has now come—to bring it from the central places of learning in this country to the homes and hearts of the people. What does that fact

mean? It means that the men who possesses that literature, whether they give 4d. for the cheapest possible edition, or whether they give £500 for a first edition of which there may be only three copies, are placed on a level, and that this influence, democratising as I believe it to be, is not democratising in the sense of levelling, it is democratising in the sense of elevating. For instance, the man who enjoys Shakespeare —the book for which Tennyson asked on his death-bed—enters a freemasonry to which all the greatest who have lived since Shakespeare belong. He sits down at a banquet to which no rank and no wealth without the necessary qualification—without the necessary wedding garment — can obtain admittance. And not merely by that is he placed in direct relation with the mind of the man who wrote that book, not merely has he an opportunity of endeavouring by his own perception to find out new nooks, new doors, and new paths in this most marvellous production of the Almighty which is called Shakespeare's mind, but he is placed also in communication with those before him, with the great minds of all time who have enjoyed Shakespeare's works. I say I believe we cannot exaggerate the intellectual freemasonry which the cheapening and diffusing of literature among us has done for our people.

It has raised humanity itself, and I believe that that cheapening process will go on to such an extent that we can hardly foretell what the future of this movement will be. I want to say one word more. It is not merely, as Mr. Barnett has said, that you place yourselves in relation with these great minds, but that you have at your hand in a book a refuge from all the worries, all the miseries, all the anxieties of life. You may not have a room to sit in, but if you have a book to read you have something which may remove you from this life to something better.

I have always been very much struck by the words which Cardinal Newman used in that great book of his life, when he is about to leave the controversial part of his previous pamphlet and enter to the story of his life. He says: "And now I am in a train of thought higher and more serene than any which slander can disturb. Away with you," he says to his traducer, "away with you into space." I think that men, whether they are in public and have their worries, or whether they have their anxieties in private, if they can take up a great book, they can say, with Cardinal Newman, "I am in a frame of mind higher than these mortal troubles can affect. Away with you, mortal troubles; away with you into space." The same idea is expressed, I think even more beauti-

fully, by Macaulay, in two stanzas which convey very well the comfort that literature has been to the great and good of all ages, and I cannot better conclude than by reading them—

"In the dark hour of shame, I designed to stand
Before the frowning peers at Bacon's side;
On a far shore I smoothed with tender hand,
Through months of pain, the sleepless bed of Hyde:

I brought the wise and brave of ancient days
To cheer the cell where Raleigh pined alone;
I lighted Milton's darkness with the blaze
Of the bright ranks that guard th' eternal throne."

I believe that to all who realise the comforts of the best of books it is unnecessary to enlarge on these noble verses.

I think we ought now, as a sign of that municipal life of which we have spoken, to begin to drop these expressions of the "West" and the "East." I have always tried in the London County Council to put an end to those distinctions, for a very simple reason. I am always afraid of the spirit creeping in of the different districts of London carefully computing how much money has been spent out of the public rates during the year, and insisting that if the same amount had not been spent in the West as in the East, or *vice versa*, that a similar amount of money should be spent there whether it is wanted or not. Therefore I was always opposed to geographical

distinction in the London County Council, and, as we have obtained unity, we ought to keep those geographical distinctions out of sight as much as possible. But there is one thing which keeps up division between the West and the East. It is a physical and practical obstacle—it is the narrowness of the streets of the City. Anybody who wishes to go from the West to the East, or from the East to the West, may be pretty certain of being jammed for half an hour at the busiest time behind a couple of large vans in one of the narrow streets; and I do not believe you will ever have what may be called the unity of London, and perfect community of feeling between the different parts of London, until you run one or two wide thoroughfares through these traps or obstacles, which are called streets, by which we pass from West to East.

AN IMAGINATIVE VIEW OF OFFICE

At the Royal Academy Banquet, 30th April 1893

MR. CHAIRMAN,—You lay upon me to-night a great and embarrassing honour. It is a great honour whether I consider the audience I address, or the body for whom I speak. I owe that honour, sir, as you have truly said, to the absence of the Prime Minister. But I owe it also to the self-abnegation of my colleagues, who thought they would best enjoy the good things you have set before them without the indigestion engendered by an after-dinner speech. It is not merely a great, but an embarrassing, honour. For six or seven years past we of her Majesty's Government have listened in uncomplaining silence on these occasions to the speeches of our rivals; and now that the scene has changed I cannot help fancying that those who sit here indeed are not men but official bodies, sometimes inhabited by Liberal souls and sometimes by Conservative souls; and those that I see in the dim distance on your left—that *locus penitentiæ*—are not men, but dis-

embodied spirits. It is embarrassing in another sense, because by a double experience I have learned how difficult it is to follow Lord Salisbury in the administration of a department; and it is certainly not less easy to follow him on this occasion in the task which he has fulfilled so admirably for the last six years, in a series of speeches little less than perfect.

There is a further difficulty. You debar us from touching on politics; but, after all, what are Ministers without politics? In politics they had their source; in politics they have the air they breathe; in politics they have the object for which they live. I do not think, sir, in similar circumstances you, sir, would like when your health was drunk to be debarred from touching upon art, nor Mr. Irving for touching upon the drama, nor any of the numerous candidates for the laureateship from touching on poetry. In the present circumstances that represents a graver disadvantage Her Majesty's Government have introduced a few measures—a handful of measures—of some importance, for which under present parliamentary conditions they have not been able to obtain adequate discussion. It struck me, when I remembered your rules, that to-night, before one of the most intellectual audiences in the world, I might have found the opportunity denied me by

Parliament in expatiating upon these measures in gross and in detail, and so spending in your company an intellectual and not unimproving evening. But I remembered myself in time.

I think that you are too much accustomed to view her Majesty's Ministers merely on their practical, and not on their imaginative side. I for my own part consider that, rightly viewed, each office of the Crown is not merely a place for the transaction of business, but a realm of imagination. I will illustrate what I mean. As regards the First Lord of the Treasury I know nothing; but I suspect that it depends very much upon the occupant of the post as to whether he would illustrate my thesis or not. As regards the Lord Chancellor I will say nothing, because his office is above imagination, and it would be indiscreet for one who holds the highest of judicial offices to indulge in anything like a flight of fancy. Nor can I say anything for my right hon. friend the Home Secretary.

> Two massy keys he bears of metals twain;
> The golden opes, the iron shuts amain.

And as he opens and shuts the prison doors of the country with an impartial hand, it would not do for him to indulge in any flights of fancy. But when I come to the other Secretaries of State my mind enlarges.

My noble friend, the Secretary for the Colonies, rules over an Empire on which the sun never sets, and it is impossible to say at any given moment on what particular part of the globe his mind may be reposing. My noble friend Lord Kimberley's mind reposes on "India's coral strand." His talk is of Oriental splendour, his dream is of Oriental luxury, only marred by the awful spectre of the constantly depreciating rupee. When we come to the next Secretary of State, Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, I do not doubt, if he be a man of the boundless and virile imagination I believe him to be, sometimes, in dreams, he pictures to himself a British Army taking the field in adequate numbers and with adequate equipment. But when I come to my own office I transcend them all. I have only to open a red box to be possessed of that magic carpet which took its possessor wherever he would go. Perhaps sometimes it carries me a little farther than that. I open it, and find myself at once in those regions where a travelled monarch and an intellectual Minister are endeavouring to reconcile the realms of Xerxes and Darius with the needs of nineteenth-century civilisation—I smell the scent of the roses, and hear the song of the bulbul. I open another box, which enables me to share the sports of the fur-seal—his island loves, his boundless swims in the Pacific; I can even follow

him to Paris and see him—the *corpus delicti*—laid on the table of the Court of Arbitration. I can go still farther. I can transfer myself to the Southern Pacific, where three of the greatest States in the world are endeavouring, not always with apparent success, to administer one of the smallest of islands —the island of Samoa—in close conjunction and alliance with one of our most brilliant men of letters. I will say this in virtue of my office—I follow every Court. Not a monarch leaves his capital on a journey, but I am on the platform in the spirit if not in the body. I am in spirit in the gallery of every Parliament. I am ready and anxious—but not always successful—to be present at the signing of every treaty. I think I have laid a sufficient claim before you to insist that, in future, when you consider her Majesty's Ministers you may not consider them merely as political creatures, but as persons who have also their imaginative side, as official Ariels roaming through time and space, not on broomsticks, but on boxes.

THE RULE OF ENGLAND IN IRELAND

In the House of Lords on 7th September 1893

I AM quite sure I speak the feeling of everybody in this House when I say that we have heard the speech of the noble and illustrious Earl [Lord Selborne]—an effort remarkable at any age, but much more remarkable when we consider the advanced age at which he has arrived—with the greatest satisfaction. I do not deny that on this side of the House at any-rate that satisfaction is of a somewhat mingled kind. It has been our fate in the past to hear the noble and learned Earl speaking on the side of the House and on the side of the question which we ourselves espoused, but I can assure him that we take his rebukes patiently. They are not mingled with any of the venom of those which we sometimes receive, and we give him all the credit that we demand ourselves for conscientious opinion. The speech of the noble Earl, as I heard it, divided itself into two distinct parts. The last part was of a kind

with which all readers of history are familiar, in which the word "capitulation" frequently occurred, and from which the phrase "unknown and rash experiments" was not absent; exactly the type of speech, in fact, which has been made against every great reform of the century—Catholic Emancipation, the first Reform Bill, and the Repeal of the Corn Laws. The first part of the speech was of a more detailed character. I do not propose, and indeed I should not be competent, to follow the noble and learned Earl in that critical and legal examination of the Bill to which he subjected it with the arts of a great lawyer, the arts of a great Chancellor; but I hope he will not think me disrespectful if I say that that argument, elaborate and interesting as it was, only added to the unreality of the debate in which we have been taking part. He supplied in one of his closing sentences the reason why it is unnecessary to discuss the criticisms which he has submitted to your Lordships, because, he said, "you are not legislating for to-day or for to-morrow." He was right. We are legislating for this day six months. This is not a dissecting-room; it is the chamber of death itself. Somewhere in the passage, in that short lobby that leads from the House of Commons to the House of Lords, this Bill caught its death of some passing chill, and it is, if I may say so

humbly, an interesting but an academic discussion, unreal in every part and particle of it, to which we have been listening for the last three days. If any peer will say that he came here with his mind open to argument, prepared to consider the Bill on its merits, prepared, if necessary, listening either to the accents of noble Lords below the gangway or to the accents of the noble Lords above, either to accept or to reject this Bill, according to the arguments that were offered, I confess he will have made a very considerable breach in the opinion that I have formed of this debate.

I waited a moment in case any noble Lord would arise and state that his mind was in that state of angelic candour, but as none has chosen to place himself in that position, I may take it for granted that my opinion is correct, and that none of your Lordships has entered this House except with a preconceived resolution for or against the Bill. I think that from one or two noble peers I did hear with a sort of blushing diffidence that they were of opinion that this Bill would ultimately be rejected. The other reason for which this discussion has been unreal and academical is, that there is no equal division of parties in this House. There is only one party in this House and a percentage of another. I do not know what is the exact number of the legions which my noble friend who leads

this House with consummate ability professes to muster under his standard, but I venture to think it would be most fitly described by the couplet that Sidney Smith put into his description of the salad—

> "Let onion atoms lurk within the bowl,
> And, half suspected, animate the whole."

Under the circumstances of this debate it is therefore not remarkable that the speeches have divided themselves mainly into two categories and classes. There are the speeches of denunciation, and among these I will give a high and honoured rank to the speech of the noble Duke, the Duke of Argyll, whom I do not see in his place, who told us with an engaging candour that he could not treat this subject with rosewater. I have nothing to say except in a spirit of gratitude of the noble Duke. He treated me in a spirit to which I am entirely unaccustomed from him, and, if I may reverse an expression in Scripture, I expected a stone and he gave me bread. He was good enough to praise a little book which I not long ago published. He read extracts from that little book, as if they were in any respect damaging to the position of the Government regarding Home Rule. From not one of the statements he read out, or from any of the statements in that little book, have I seen the slightest cause to recede; but at the

same time it does not in any degree impair my general loyalty to the course which has been pursued by her Majesty's Government. One of the great specialities of the noble Duke is this—that he is always going to make a speech about Home Rule on every subject which may present itself to your Lordships, but that he never gets to Home Rule. Just as he is approaching it, just as we think we have the cue to the argument for which we have so long sought, he is seized by that fatal and malignant disease to which he is more subject perhaps than any other of the many invalids who suffer under it in both Houses of Parliament—*lues Gladstoniana.* He is led away by some morbid spirit to discuss and analyse the views and the speeches of the statesman whom he is proud and pleased to call, in every term of affection, his "right hon. friend." I do not see why candour should not reign among friends, but I do think the noble Duke reads more into the character of my right hon. friend than even his greatest admirers have been able to perceive. He reminds me of the lines in *The Rejected Addresses*—

> "Who makes the quartern loaf and Luddites rise?
> Who fills the butchers' shops with large blue flies?"

I cannot help thinking that, as my right hon. friend and the noble Duke advance in years, the flies perceived by the noble Duke get larger and

bluer on every occasion. I know that we on this bench are below his notice. We are merely Gladstonian items, blind tools of an imperious and, if I rightly understood him, a partially insane Prime Minister. It is a comfort under these circumstances to find out that he had once been one of these Gladstonian items himself. I had almost forgotten the lapse of time since he left the Liberal party, but he reminded us last night, with a good deal of expression and force, that he had been a member of a Cabinet that had proposed a Bill which he considered eminently absurd—a confession which I do not suppose that anyone of my colleagues on that bench, who have been longer in Gladstonian Cabinets than I have, is able to make on this or any other occasion.

I pass from the choice specimen of invective provided by the noble Duke to the more full-flavoured, and perhaps from my point of view equally interesting, specimen provided by the noble Marquis last night. It was one of the most interesting speeches I ever heard in my life. It was like a dictionary of animated quotations. He had an enormous mass of elegant extracts in his hand, and he read them out sometimes from Irish sources, and sometimes from Ministerial sources. He is bitten by a disease parallel but not exactly similar to that under which the Duke of Argyll is

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suffering. His disease is the *morbus Spenceranus*. As I heard him, I began faintly to imagine the course of debate in an Irish Second Chamber when that Irish Second Chamber should come into being, because it was like Cicero of Ulster denouncing Cataline of Cork with outstretched finger, piercing eyes, and queries in every interruption; and I am glad to find that my noble friend is able to be present this evening without any material deterioration of his health. I said there were two classes into which the speeches of *this* debate divided themselves. One is mainly the speech of invective. That, I confess, is the speech I prefer, as being more lively. The other is the speech of detailed examination of the measure that you have determined to destroy. I do not know why noble Lords think it right to fire this sort of military salute over the grave of this Bill. Every one of their speeches is couched in the spirit of Antony's speech in the Senate House: "I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him."

We do not expect praise of the Bill from noble Lords below the gangway or from noble Lords opposite, but I think they might, under the very delicate circumstances of the case, spare us any detailed criticism, or, in fact, any detailed reasons founded on the Bill, when they have already made up their minds. May I take three instances of

what I mean? I will take the instance of the noble and learned Lord who has just sat down. He discussed at great length and with every variety of treatment the question of the retention of the Irish members in Parliament. Now, I say that the retention of the Irish members in Parliament, though a very important detail, though an organic detail, is only a detail still, and that if the noble and learned Earl had any genuine and sincere wish to discuss this Bill on its merits he might perfectly well have voted for the second reading, reserving this point of the retention of the Irish members. I think he might give us some credit for the fact that the retention or exclusion of the Irish members is not a point unattended altogether by difficulty. In 1886 we proposed their entire exclusion. From what I understand to-night the noble and learned Earl has a preference for that course. I wish he had told us so in 1886. [The Earl of Selbourne.—"I did."] I am greatly obliged to the noble and learned Earl; the circumstance escaped my recollection. What we did hear were much louder voices demanding the retention of the Irish members as essential to the integrity and supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. If the noble and learned Earl prefers that course, I can tell him that, as far as I can gather from his public speeches, he has a very illustrious colleague in that

preference—no less than the Prime Minister himself. No one who read the speech of the Prime Minister on the second reading, no one who has read his speeches in the country, will doubt that it was owing to the overwhelming pressure of public opinion, both within and without his party, that he gave way on that particular point to the wishes of those around him.

And I must say this about the rather jaunty manner in which noble Lords opposite bestow their criticism on this Bill. They seem to think that any criticism is fatal to any clause; that the Bills which they are in the habit of introducing are essentially perfect and unamendable; and that the subject with which we have to deal, if properly dealt with, would present no difficulty at all. To-night I would ask to waive all discussion of the Bill, for the reason that, in my opinion, first, that discussion is an unreal discussion; and secondly, the point on which we are at issue to-night is much larger than this Bill or than any Bill. It is the vast question of the policy which we propose for Ireland—a policy which, on the one side, is founded on the experience of the past, and which, on the other side, is in the womb of the future. I cannot help thinking that in taking this view of this discussion, and in making it a question of a policy and not of a Bill, we might do something to

raise both the debate and ourselves. We might do something better than chew the dry bones of the Bill, or what is left of them by the keen and unwearied teeth of the House of Commons, and we might at least desist from the petty and pitiful personal recrimination which has been indulged in. There is not one of you, my Lords, who in his heart believes that we are Separatists and traitors and place-hunters. There is not one sane member of your Lordships' House who believes in the imputations which are made freely outside, though not inside this House, on the honesty of our motives. And we, on our side, do not believe that you are statesmen anxious to tyrannise and ride rough-shod over the Irish people, and imbrue your hands in Irish gore. The truth is very simple; and if we were to open our eyes to that truth we should greatly facilitate discussion. We are two political parties disagreeing as to the best practical method of governing and conciliating Ireland. That is a very great question in itself. No much greater question could occupy us. It is a question which has puzzled the wisest minds of ages past; and I do not believe that we, in attempting to arrive at an honest conclusion on this subject, will much further our purpose by blackening the political morality of a political party. You may be certain in regard to this controversy, of the infallibility of

the course you have pursued or propose to pursue. I may frankly say that I am by no means sure of mine. I am not certain about anything with regard to Ireland. I was never more gratified than by those cheers. They show that there are some points, at least, on which noble Lords opposite have not yet made up their minds. They are not quite certain about Ireland. That is, at least, a ray of hope. I say that I am not certain about Ireland; but I can at least say this, that I have come to the conclusion at which I have arrived after a long and painful study—that I have arrived at the convictions which I hold in the teeth of all, or almost all, that would tend to make me take the other side.

We here have known the bitterest pang that can fall to public men to suffer. We have known the separation from colleagues and friends. We have known not merely separation from colleagues, but the bitterness of their denunciations of us; and I venture to say that if we had been anxious to lead a quiet life or a pleasant life, if we had been willing to sacrifice our convictions, as you think or assert that we have sacrificed them, it would not have been in the direction which we are pursuing that we should have gone. My Lords, I say then to-night that it is not the Bill, but the policy, which is at issue, and nobody knows that better than your Lordships. Your treatment of the Bill shows it

both in the House of Lords and in the House of Commons. It seems to me that there were in the House of Commons two logical courses to pursue, and only two, with regard to the Bill. The first was to say that you could not touch it in any shape or form; that you would have no dealings with the accursed thing; that you would vote for its rejection on the second reading; and that nothing would induce you to incur any responsibility for any detail of the Bill. The other course was this. Having accepted the second reading as the expression of the voice of Ireland on its own destiny, and the voice of the House of Commons as to what it thought best for Ireland, that you should endeavour at anyrate to manipulate it in order to get it as much to your minds as possible. And I am perfectly certain of this—and I am speaking without consultation with, but in the hearing of, many of my colleagues—that if you had taken that second course, and frankly accepted the principle of some large measure of local legislature in Ireland, and had offered *bonâ fide* suggestions with a view of bringing that to pass in a manner consonant, as you believed, with the safety and integrity of the Empire, we should have held out not one, but both hands to welcome your assistance. My Lords, the Opposition in the House of Commons did not care to take either course.

The course pursued reminded me of a very interesting national sport to which, perhaps, none of your Lordships are addicted—I mean the Spanish bull-fight. The bull-fight in Spain is a national and almost sacred institution. They have to kill the bull, that is the primary purpose. You had to kill the Bill, that was your purpose; and you went about it very much in the same way. The first act of the drama is when the *toreadors*, or lance-bearers, attack the bull openly. The bull generally gets the better of them, and they are hurried from the scene. That stage is analogous to the second reading of our Bill. Then comes the stage when the light infantry of the bull-ring—I cannot pronounce their name, but I can write it on paper—attempt to fix light darts into the bull, to prick it all over, and to annoy and exasperate it in every way, not for the purpose of killing it or wounding it seriously, but apparently out of general "cussedness." That, I think, reflects not unfaithfully the Committee stage. Then comes the last and most solemn process of all, when the *matador* comes into the ring. In one hand he holds the sword for the purpose of killing the bull, and in the other a cloak with which to mislead the bull as to his intentions. And I think I recognise the noble Marquis opposite in the features of the *matador*. The contrast in the treatment of the Bill by the two Houses is very

remarkable. The House of Commons lingered over it with a sort of affectionate solicitude. If they saw the slightest danger of its departure they hastily pinned new sheets of amendments to its wings, and it might be said almost that they viewed its appearance and disappearance with equal regret. I do not know of anything like it since the occasion when the well-known traveller Herman Melville was surrounded by almost every luxury and attention on the island of Tahiti, when nothing was too good for him, and he enjoyed it all, till he found out that it was only preparing him for a meal that was subsequently to take place on his own fattened carcase.

But the House of Lords treats this Bill in a very different spirit. It gives it a very short shrift indeed. Less than a week is sufficient from the time of its leaving the House of Commons for its destruction in the House of Lords. Here there are none of those little attentions which distinguished it in the House of Commons. There are no amendments, no instructions to the Committee, and no Committee to instruct. I do not know that there is anything which this Bill, in its treatment, so much resembles as the old recipe for cooking a pike. You fill the pike with everything that is most rich, rare, and toothsome in quality, and having done that, you fling the pike out of the window as being of no value at all. This was

very humorous behaviour of the Tory party in the House of Commons, and it is not altogether without humour in the House of Lords. But surely your conduct is hardly respectful to your colleagues in the House of Commons. At what a price do you value all their ability, their energy, and their time! I know that they did not attempt obstruction; such a course as that they would indignantly repudiate. But they did attempt legislation. They did succeed in introducing some clauses into the Bill; and the result of all their efforts, of all their quips and cranks, of all their philippics, of all their physical and even pugilistic encounters is, that at the moment the Bill arrives at the House of Lords you have nothing to say to it at all. I do not know whether we are to consider that the course of the House of Commons was entirely a matter of blowing soap bubbles; that it was merely a sham fight; that it was merely the playing of a big fish, while confident in the conviction that the noble Duke was on the bank ready with the gaff for it. There was one very instructive illustration of the way in which this Bill was treated by the Conservative party in the House of Commons. And when I say the Conservative party, I do not mean the free and uncontrollable free-lances of the Conservative party, but the solid and respectable and almost venerable occupants of the front bench. I will

take the clause on which the noble and learned Earl has spent so much time, the ninth clause, now, I think, the tenth.

Let us apply to that the test of either not touching "the accursed thing," or only touching "the accursed thing" in order to amend it in some given direction. On 10th July the front Conservative bench voted in Committee for retaining the whole of the 103 members instead of 80 to vote for imperial purposes. That was a large and liberal allowance, even more liberal than the noble and learned Earl would be inclined to concede. This was the way in which the Conservative Opposition in the House of Commons endeavoured to avoid the evil of too large an Irish mixture in the Imperial Parliament. The same day they voted on an amendment by Mr. Heneage for the total exclusion of all the Irish members. On 11th July an amendment was proposed by Mr. Seton-Karr to reduce the number to 48; on 13th July they voted in favour of the "in-and-out" arrangement against Mr. Gladstone's final proposal of 80 members for all purposes; and last, they voted to omit the clause altogether. "Hear, hear," says the noble Viscount opposite. Will the noble Viscount tell me the object of these tactics? Was it to bring parliamentary institutions into contempt? I do not credit the noble Viscount, one of the pillars of

the Constitution, with any such nefarious design; but to the rank outsider, the arm-chair critic, it appears as if the real design was to bring parliamentary institutions into disrepute. It has had that effect; I do not know whether it was meant to bring them into disrepute, and invite some Cromwell to put an end to them both for imperial and Irish purposes. I say that, great as has been the responsibility of the House of Commons in this matter, your responsibility is tenfold greater. You have undertaken a tremendous responsibility. I will not ask what means you have taken to fortify yourselves for the contest in which you are preparing to enter. I will say nothing as to the general position of this House.

I have never concealed my opinion as to the unfortunate condition of an unreformed House of Lords. On two occasions I have brought that subject before your Lordships. For any peer holding the opinions that I do to bring any subject in any circumstances before this House is merely waste of time and breath. But I will say this, and I say it in sober seriousness, without any wish to say anything that could be disagreeable to the noble Marquis opposite, for whose abilities I entertain a sincere admiration: I do believe that perhaps the gravest reproach that posterity and history will bring against his six years of

government is this — that he made no serious attempt to reform the Second Chamber, which, after all, is the pillar of the Conservative party. I am sure that he himself will be the last to disclaim any such description for the little Bill which was being withdrawn by the late Mr. Smith in the House of Commons at the time he was about to explain it to us in the House of Lords. But I venture to think, with regard to this contest in which you are about to engage, there is a particular consideration which should have not much less weight with you than the general consideration which I have submitted to you. The noble Marquis [Lord Zetland] alluded the other night, in terms of some disparagement, to the fact that the benches behind the Government were not swarming with Irish peers. They do not usually swarm with peers of any kind, and I do not particularly know why on this occasion they should swarm with Irish peers. There are, as I see from a return recently issued, 113 Irish peers who have seats, I think, in this House. I want to know—because it is an important factor in fighting five-sixths of the popular representation of Ireland—how many of those Irish peers can be said in any sense whatever to represent any part of Ireland except that fraction of a province which you choose for your own purposes to call the

province of Ulster. I say it without the slightest desire to say anything that may be offensive to an Irish peer, but at the same time it is true. The noble Lord [Lord Muskerry] who spoke with great vehemence from behind the Opposition bench the other night, told us two or three times in the course of his speech that he knew all about Ireland. That is not the question. The question on this occasion is—I do not wish to put it offensively—what does Ireland know about him? Does he represent Ireland in any shape or form? Because if this House is going with 113 Irish peers, who, I venture to say, can only represent one class in Ireland, to enter into a contest with the House of Commons on a subject in which they are face to face with five-sixths of the Irish representation, on a subject which concerns all and every class in Ireland, then I say they are very insufficiently equipped indeed.

I repeat that in my opinion your responsibility with regard to this Bill is infinitely greater than the House of Commons. I will tell you why. It is because you are masters of the situation, and you have the power absolutely in your hands. The noble Duke who moved the rejection of this Bill, and whose speech I had the misfortune not to hear, at Ilkley recently spoke of the reasons which made him desirous to move the rejection of this

Bill. One of the reasons he gave was that the Bill has not had adequate opportunity of discussion. Now, I say, you are in the position of being able to give it the fullest and freest opportunity. If your objection to this Bill was really on the ground that it had not had sufficient discussion, you could in a moment put an end to that complaint, and give it more discussion than any Bill ever received. You could, if you have any wish to settle this Irish question in a way in which I have sometimes felt it will be settled, by an agreement between both political parties, you have an opportunity on this occasion, which I suppose you are going to throw away, of obtaining adequate discussion and of having a conference which should settle the terms on which Ireland should have self-government in the future—a conference not less elaborate, not less important, nor less representative than that which met in May 1787 to settle the matchless constitution of the United States.

You may say that you do not wish to have anything to do with any form of Home Rule. But that is not the case. I do not know what it may be with noble Lords opposite, but after all noble Lords must remember that many of the reforms they have opposed they have come with the greatest philosophy to propose themselves in course of time; and therefore they must not be too

absolutely certain that the course they are likely to pursue on this occasion is conclusive. But with regard to the Liberal Unionist leaders the case is different indeed. We have the election addresses of Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Hartington in 1886, in which they plainly state and lay down the fact that, after all, Home Rule is mainly a question of degree; and they state the limitations succinctly and definitely within which they may be prepared to grant Home Rule. Are they of that opinion now? If so, the noble Duke was singularly ill-advised in moving the rejection of this Bill, because what might you have done? You might have allowed the second reading to pass *sub silentio*, or have carried it with every form of protest; but when you got into Committee you might have modelled the Bill to your liking. You might have struck out every clause you disliked,—perhaps you will say that would be every clause,—then it would have been open to you to substitute what clauses you preferred. You might have had an opportunity —which, of course, you are not going to take—of declaring and defining your policy with regard to this great question of Ireland. The Bill might then have gone down to the House of Commons, where it would have met, no doubt, with a stout resistance. But what would ultimately have come about, what would have happened if you and they

had both insisted on the mass of your amendments? A conference might have taken place between the two Houses which might have led to a future result; and I say that the patriotic course for your Lordships to have taken, unless you are determined never to devolve any local business to Ireland, was to give this Bill a second reading, and take an opportunity of settling with the other House. I find that suggestion receives very little favour from noble Lords opposite. I can quite understand the prospect of spending laborious days and nights in Committee right through September, far into October, with perhaps a conference in November, is not particularly inviting; but I am not sure, according to the precedent we have before us, that we are not likely to spend a great deal more time in other ways if some such course as this is not adopted. We have been constantly taunted by noble Lords opposite, with changing our minds in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the bidding of a scarcely responsible politician. For us, after all, knowing what our fate in the division is likely to be, this is the main question: How did it come about that in the year 1886 a great English party, comprising responsible men — an ex-Viceroy of Ireland and an ex-Chief Secretary —deliberately proposed a measure of Home Rule, a measure which they resisted for eighty years?

The noble and learned Lord has given his history; and I should like, on the other hand, to be allowed to give mine, because, after all, it is a point on which our characters are at stake. I speak as a witness, but not as an enthusiastic witness, in favour of Home Rule. With me, at anyrate, for I am speaking for one moment of myself, Home Rule is not a fanaticism; it is not a question of sentiment; it is scarcely even a question of history. It is not a counsel of perfection; but it is on the whole the best of the courses to be pursued in dealing with a highly critical and complex subject. With me, at anyrate, it is merely a question of policy, and as such alone I argue it. I argue it simply as a question of policy, and I take it no higher and no lower than that. It seems to me that the function of anyone who pretends to be a statesman is to attempt to sever what is really wheat from what is really chaff. It is a long and laborious process, and it is in attempting to do that with regard to the Irish question that I have become a supporter of Home Rule. I will go one step farther. I say that I am not an enthusiastic witness on this subject, and I will make one or two other admissions. The noble Duke (the Duke of Argyll) spoke strongly last night about the Union; he said it was a matter of necessity, and I entirely agree with the noble Duke. I believe that there is

sacrcely any statesman who, if he had been in Mr. Pitt's place, confronted with such a war as that which he had to face, confronted with the rebellion of 1798, would not have sought in the Union a refuge and a guarantee against Irish disaffection. But I must also add this—the Union was only a portion of Mr. Pitt's policy. I believe that if the whole of his policy had been adopted; if the payment of the Catholic clergy, if Catholic emancipation, if the abolition of tithes had been carried concurrently with the Act of Union, we should not now be discussing a Home Rule Bill. So far we seem to be in some measure of accord. But, unfortunately, much has happened since the Union. The Duke of Argyll said that the last utterance of Grattan was in favour of the Union. Well, I think the most striking sentence in all Grattan's speeches occurs in the last of those speeches; and it is not favourable to the Union. It is this: "The ocean protests against separation, and the sea against the Union." What he meant, I take it, was this—that while separation from the imperial control of Great Britain was impossible because of the ocean which surrounds these islands, it was equally impossible, because of the sea that separated them, to attempt to administer Irish local affairs at Westminster. That is all the admission I have to make with regard to this question.

Our views of Home Rule are founded upon history; but they are founded on a history somewhat more recent than the Union—on very recent history indeed. The noble and learned Earl said, very truly, that the departure in favour of Home Rule was taken in 1885. Now, I am going to approach a subject on which the noble Marquis, the leader of the Opposition, is extremely sensitive, and I shall be greatly surprised if I get to the end of my few sentences without an interruption or interpellation from him. What occurred in 1885 to make this change in our course? It was simply this. We left office upon a side issue; I think it was a vote with regard to the beer duties; and we went out prepared to renew certain clauses of the Coercion Act, certain clauses which we thought necessary with our detailed knowledge of Irish administration and affairs. The noble Marquis came in. Last night the noble Marquis said he was most unwilling to come in—that he was forced to come in. That is very much at variance with my recollection. I do not, of course, know what the internal feelings of the noble Marquis were; that no one can judge but himself. If he means that he was forced to come in by his followers who wanted to come in, I believe that what he says is strictly and accurately true. But if he says he was in any sense forced to come in by our Government,

his memory is playing him a trick. What occurred was this; I remember perfectly well. The noble Marquis entered into some negotiations with the outgoing Government as to the measure of support he would receive if he was prepared to take office. The noble Marquis asked for the support of the then Government until the general election took place, and he said that without that support he would not take office. We were unable to give him that support; we told him so; and yet he took office. Therefore I am under the impression that if there was any compulsion on the noble Marquis to take office, it was not, as he implied, from this side of the House, but it was from his own side. What happened? The noble Marquis, without the slightest examination into the facts of the case, without even the twenty-four hours he thought necessary in 1886 to examine the state of Ireland, without any possible examination of the state of the case, said he was determined to try the experiment of governing Ireland without what was called coercion. That was a very grave announcement, because it cut altogether the ground from beneath the feet of the Liberal party. Coercion is a valuable instrument, but coercion demands continuity. If either party is prepared as a matter of party politics to abandon any idea of administering coercion without regard to the circumstances of the

case, from that time coercion becomes impossible. I will give an illustration, but I will not give it as from myself; it would not be proper to do so, because of the office I hold. I remember that Mr. Chamberlain, in a famous and much-quoted speech, said that the rule of England in Ireland was parallel to that of Russia in Poland or of Austria in Venice. I do not know what takes place in Poland now. Therefore I would rather take the case of Austria and Venice, which is now merely matter of history. Austria held Venice entirely by coercion. Would Austria have been able to hold Venice if every four or five years a party was to come in and announce that it had not examined the case, but it was prepared to drop coercion? Does it stand to common sense? The Venetians might have been better off, but the rule of Austria as described by Mr. Chamberlain would have come to an end. The Liberal party, forced, and I think happily forced, from coercion, was obliged to try a new experiment and a new departure. We were face to face not merely with the abandonment of coercion by the opposite party, but we were also face to face with the moral and material failure of the Union to secure prosperity to Ireland. What was the proof of the moral failure? It was that eighty or ninety members out of a hundred came back from Ireland prepared to strike a mortal

blow at that Union. The proof of the material failure was given last night, copiously and with much wealth of statistics, by Lord Playfair in his extremely interesting speech.

The late Lord Chancellor of Ireland cast a good deal of ridicule upon statistics of potatoes grown to the acre now as compared with former days, and seemed to think these details were beneath the notice of a statesman; but I venture to think that, if the proverb correctly describes as the greatest benefactor of his species the man who makes two blades of grass grow where one grew before, it is not unnatural to take the correlative view, and say that that Government is not the greatest benefactor of its species that makes one blade grow where two grew before. We then were driven, and not unwillingly driven, to the policy of Home Rule; all other policies we had tried had failed; this alone remained, and we tried it. The Bill of 1886 was introduced with a burst of enthusiasm, and rejected by a considerable majority in the House of Commons, and at the polls by an overwhelming majority. I do not regret that defeat, and I am sure noble Lords opposite will not regret it either. I do not regret it, because it was good for the Liberal party to have a full experience in opposition of the advantage of the measure they had proposed in 1886 by contrast

with the policy proposed by their successors. It was good, also, because it made the Irish party more known to the Liberal party; and in the third place, because it tested the professions of the Government and of their Liberal Unionist supporters. The professions of the Liberal Unionists were to have no coercion and no land purchase. Since that time circumstances have widely changed. There has been a Land Purchase Bill involving an expenditure of ten millions, and there has been a Coercion Bill accompanied by the curt instruction, "Do not hesitate if necessary to shoot." All this confirms our view that the course we had chosen was the one and only alternative to coercion. After that experience we came to this Bill. But we have also other motives besides history for coming to this conclusion. We have, in the first place, an Irish representation which is almost unanimously in favour of it. We have also the difficulty of understanding Ireland in England, which seems to me to be very great.

I do not suppose that most wedded unions are precisely qualified to gain the historic flitch of bacon at the end of twelve months, but even then they are not always considered a failure. But what is to be held of a couple who, after a silver or even a golden wedding, come to the Divorce Court on the ground of incompatibility of temper?

That is the case with regard to Ireland. We had, besides that the necessity of devolution, on both imperial and local considerations. We were sick of always voting Bills that the Irish always opposed, and we were sick of voting money that the Irish always disregarded. I myself would have preferred some scheme of devolution which would have been applicable to all countries alike in the United Kingdom, such as that I indicated in that speech at Paisley which has formed so favourite a theme with the Opposition. But you cannot get all you want. There is a fatal objection to an equal scheme of devolution. The maximum you want for England would not be the minimum you want for Ireland, and so you would cause discontent to both parties without achieving your object. And we had further this object, that we wanted to get Ireland out of the way. We want to get Ireland out of the way in order that the time and energy that it engrossed might be better given to other purposes. There is another motive that I would wish to give for this Home Rule policy, and it is perhaps a more homely one. It is to some extent a feeling of mortified pride that makes the Liberal party take up Home Rule. No one can doubt that, if you could set Ireland afloat at this moment and float her across the ocean till she reached the shores of America, within ten years, as

a State of the Union, she would be as prosperous and contented as any other State of the Union. I say it is a reproach to our Empire, to our Government, and to our Parliament, that while we covet every square inch of unoccupied ground that we can administer of the world, right at the core of our Empire there is, and there has been for seven or eight centuries, a difficulty, we openly confess, but with which we are hopelessly unable to deal. May I give two other reasons—reasons which are usually given as arguments against Home Rule, but which make me a Home Ruler at this time? The first is the phrase that is constantly used—the "dismemberment of the Empire." A more meaningless phrase was never invented.

It is because I wish to avert a practical dismemberment of the Empire, that I stand before your Lordships as a supporter of Home Rule to-night. There has only been one great dismemberment of the Empire. That occurred about a century ago. It was when the United States broke off from their allegiance and set up as a separate State across the Atlantic. What was the cause of that dismemberment? Was it because of too great a respect for their local aspirations? No, it was your insisting on establishing your own views of law and order in that country, in disregard of the wishes of the colonists. And what I fear is

this, that if we do not arrive at some such scheme as we propose, and I do not pledge myself to the details of the scheme, we shall have that practical dismemberment, which is implied by Ireland sullen, discontented, and rebellious, always at our side. ' There is another ground on which I am a supporter of Home Rule. It is constantly urged as an objection to any such Bill. It is on the ground of foreign policy. I am not at all sure that the Opposition are not right in saying that foreign Governments distrust the proposals for establishing a Home Rule Parliament in Ireland. But I put that down, with all respect to any distinguished representatives of foreign powers who may be here, rather to that ignorance which all nations have of other nations, than as a deadly argument against our proposal. But what is the case? At present we have from 25,000 to 30,000 troops in Ireland in time of peace. What force would you want in time of war? I would ask one more question. If you were engaged in a European war what would be the first point at which your enemy would attempt to reach you? What would be your most vulnerable point? It would, of course, be Ireland. I do not know whether they would be successful in establishing themselves there—they have made many attempts; but if, with the gigantic armies of the Continent,

anything were to happen to your fleet, not 25,000 nor 30,000 nor 100,000 men would prevent the invasion of Ireland, and the invasion by a foreign force would find many friends on its shores. The true defence of Ireland from the point of view of foreign policy is to give Ireland something worth defending, to give her something that no liberating nation could offer, to give her institutions which she would value as much as we value ours, and, in fine, to set up that spirit of contentment which is so sadly lacking at the present moment. While there are positive arguments in favour of our proposal, there is an overwhelming negative argument. What do you propose? Have you any scheme—any such scheme as the noble Duke adumbrated in his election address of 1886, any such scheme as Mr. Chamberlain in his election address of the same year? If you had such a scheme, I venture to say it would find no unfriendly reception on these benches. We are only too anxious to get the Irish question out of the way, in order to make way for English, Scotch, and Welsh reforms. You must have a scheme. When we go out, the eighty Irish members will not go out too. They will remain with you. You may reduce them by a small percentage, and I believe that is part of your scheme, but that will not alter five-sixths of the representation of Ireland. You

will not get rid of the eighty Irish members; they will remain as a clog, a calculus, and an aneurism in the middle of your body politic, which you will have to take some drastic measure to remove. I remember what was the former policy of the noble Marquis—I do not know whether it remains the same—twenty years of resolute government and free emigration. How are you to get your twenty years of resolute government? Twenty years means three Parliaments. Will you get three Parliaments to give you *carte blanche* to administer resolute government in Ireland? You have not so far been able to get more than one. I do not think we are prepared to give a perpetual dictatorship, but on the other hand there is a difficulty in any twenty years of resolute government. The democracy cannot govern, and will not govern, in the way you wish them to govern. You may have your Coercion Bills; you may have your "Do not hesitate to shoot" policy if you will, but you will also have incidents inseparable from coercion; you will have regrettable incidents which will inspire the whole country with a horror and hatred of your policy, such as existed three or four years before the general election.

Is emigration any better remedy or more practicable than twenty years of resolute government? Emigration greatly increases the difficulty with

which you have to deal, if you send out discontented instead of contented emigrants. If you are merely going to pour into the United States or Australia Irish peasants torn from their homes by the impossibility of living there, going with a burning hatred of your institutions and your monarchy, you will raise up ten evils for the one you are laying. You have tried your policy, and it has failed. It has reduced already your British majority, and it has produced no effect on the Irish majority in the House of Commons against you. I do not know that you have any but three choices left to you. The first is the disfranchisement of Ireland, and its conversion into a Crown colony; the second is your former policy, which is, if I may say so, both expensive and ineffective; and the third is some form of Home Rule. The first is impossible, and the third you have not come to yet, but you may not be long in coming. But what will happen if you pursue the policy you adopted in the last Parliament? We shall have Ireland always on our back, that incubus that we have been so anxious to shake off by Home Rule. The noble Marquis in 1887 said, "The politics of the present are all summed up in the word Ireland," and he was perfectly right; but we should be entitled to expect, from his utterances as to resolute government and emigration, that we should

have had some time for English and Scotch legislation. But how was the time occupied in the House of Commons?

In 1887 there were 39 private Irish Bills and eight Government Bills, occupying 96 days. In 1888 there were 43 private Bills and 13 Government Bills, taking 63 days. In 1889 there were 32 private Bills, and nine Government Bills — total, 41 — occupying 52 days; and so we go on with an equal story all through those six years, though you promised us that we should discharge that burden of English legislation and Irish business by your resolute government; but it was found equally as heavy, as obnoxious, and as encumbering as it had ever been in any previous Parliament. I put aside the expense with which this policy is accompanied, the million or so spent on light railways and sops to feed the Cerberus of Irish discontent which you are unable by any means to allay. But, in pursuing the policy of Irish Home Rule, we are guided quite as much by discontent and dread of what you propose, as by any special content with what we have proposed ourselves. We see in the future that if your policy be pursued, we shall have all those secret societies of assassination and outrage once more brought to work their way in Ireland, because the one hope which inspires the Irish people to withstand the incentives to rebellion

and outrage will then disappear. We see Parliament encumbered, we see great expense, we see great waste of time; and we know that, whether you plaster Ireland with your garrisons or with your gold, the end of it, by some devious path or other, will be only some form of Home Rule. It is animated by these considerations, both positive and negative, that we have adopted the course which has brought so much obloquy upon us, both from our open foes opposite and our open friends on my right. We propose this Bill in the sense so much decried by the noble Earl, as an experiment. I grant that it is an experiment. All legislation is experimental, and all Irish legislation is necessarily experimental. But it is at least a large and a generous experiment. I remember only two experiments of equal magnitude—I think they were of greater magnitude—that have ever been proposed to Parliament in my time. They both struck deep at the Conservative institutions of this country, they both menaced all that the party opposite holds dear, and they were both, I need hardly say, proposed by a Tory Government. One was the establishment of the London County Council—an infinitely more perilous experiment than the establishment of an Irish Parliament could ever be, where you focussed into one small body all the social, all the revolutionary elements,

all the discontent, and all the poverty of an unprecedented aggregation of five millions of people. The second was the Reform Bill of 1867. I well remember the introduction of that Bill, which was brought in by the noble and brilliant Prime Minister of that time, Lord Derby, who tossed it on the table with the exclamation: "My Lords, I bring you this. This is, after all, but a leap in the dark." We claim that this Bill is not a leap in the dark. We claim that it is a leap towards the light, a leap and a long stride towards a more generous Irish policy, towards the reconcilement of two great nations, too long connected and too long divided; and, furthermore, a considerable stride towards that adjustment and devolution of local business which will alone enable the British people to support the vast and various burdens of their Empire.

THE MUNICIPAL RENAISSANCE

At the opening of New Municipal Buildings, Battersea, 15th November 1893

I DO not think I ever received an honour which flattered me more than the invitation to be present here to-day, because it was an invitation, free and spontaneous, to one who is not a liver among you, but a stranger except by name. It is for that reason that, though I am hardly pressed for time, I had no hesitation in at once giving a promise that I would come to you on any day that you chose to name. I make one merit of that, and it is this—that in the office which I hold, which is very much in reality too heavy for any single man to bear, one has to live almost a monastic life in the office which one administers; and eight hours as the maximum of toil seems to us only a dim, distant, and golden vision. Battersea, with all its 160,000 inhabitants, has not yet the power, perhaps will never have the power, to give its freedom to any man. But I consider that if any stranger has

a right to consider himself a freeman of Battersea, it is I. You asked me to help your free library; you asked me to open your bridge; and now, to crown all, you have done me this most distinguished honour of asking me to inaugurate your municipal buildings. These municipal buildings, ladies and gentlemen, are no mean thing in themselves. They are a noble and stately structure, which may form an honest source of pride to every inhabitant and citizen of Battersea. But they are, besides that, a symptom of that municipal renascence which is creeping over London. You have here now a free library; you have, or are going to have very shortly, a technical institute; you have a gigantic organ, and you must have a palace to put it in; and, last of all, you have this noble building. Well, why is it that we who are interested in municipal life welcome these things? It is not because they are unique, because other places have technical institutes, and other places have free libraries, and other places have town halls.

It is because it is a symptom of what I have contrived to call that municipal renascence which we welcome as a most hopeful sign in London for the present and the future. In London hitherto that spirit has been singularly dead. Within the City there has been, there probably is,

a considerable development of municipal spirit. But outside the City it has never existed. We have had plenty of political spirit in London. On one occasion, in a fit of political spirit, we cut off the head of our king. On another occasion, in a fit of Protestant fervour, and in the name of religion, we burnt down half London. And even within our own days we have not altogether fallen short of these lofty ideals, and in order to lower the suffrage we have pulled down the palings of Hyde Park. That, no doubt, is some time ago, though it is well within my memory. Although we have not been able to give any such signal proof of political spirit since then, there are few Sundays in the year in which we do not throng the streets and flock into the Park at the call of some great cause, from the spread of temperance down to the claims of Sir Roger Tichborne. Well, though we have political spirit in abundance, we have hitherto lacked the municipal spirit. While other dwellers in England and Wales have each been proud of their birthplace and their home, it was the Londoner alone who was not. The Yorkshireman was proud of being a Yorkshireman, the Birmingham man of being a Birmingham man, the Manchester man of being a Manchester man, but you never heard of a Londoner who was proud of being a Londoner until now. There was

nothing to boast of. London was a wilderness of houses inhabited by a multitude of men. But it represented to the dwellers of those houses simply their place of toil, their place of industry, their place of business, without any community of feeling or aim. I declare it is the greatest pride of this generation among the five millions who inhabit this vast city that all this should be changed, that London should be waking up, that London should at last be conscious of its greatness, that London should see in itself not a mere aggregate of houses more or less hideous, but a city which, as it is the first in the world in size, may become the first in comfort and the excellence of its administration. Ladies and gentlemen, what are the two qualities that have been developed by this waking up of London? The first, I take it, is self-respect. London begins to feel respect for itself ever since the date when by a freely-elected body it has managed its own affairs as it is conscious they ought to be managed. Before then we were at the mercy of vestries more or less admirable, some of them, I believe, far from admirable. But on this occasion I gladly except the Battersea Vestry from any of the reproaches which may be directed against vestries in general. We were at the mercy of vestries; we were at the mercy of the shortlived Metropolitan Board of

Works, of which I will say nothing, for it is better to say nothing but good of the dead, and I do not know that I have any special good to say. As regards municipal life, London was like Lazarus in the parable, and only took the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. The institution of the County Council has changed all that.

We at last feel that we have a centre for our hopes and aspirations, that we have a body, industrious, zealous, pure, practical, to which we can look in order to carry out our wishes. There is another quality which has been developed by the new birth of life in London, and that is emulation. I am not going to say which I believe to be the best of the various municipalities under the great head of London. I have not sufficient knowledge; and besides, I might be torn in pieces by those who think differently. I have a secret belief that Chelsea would be supposed to lead the way; but by the cold silence with which you receive that announcement I presume you know a municipality which you think is much better than Chelsea. Well, ladies and gentlemen, on a famous occasion it fell to the Athenian generals to name the general they thought best fitted to command them. Each of them had the right to name the best general, and then the man who was next best

qualified. They each wrote themselves as best qualified, and for the second name they gave that of Themistocles. Themistocles was therefore declared elected. Therefore, I think that Battersea would be disposed to cast its vote for Battersea, and it might be inclined to give Chelsea the second place. I think that is put with as much tact as it can be. But my point does not depend upon whether Chelsea is better than Battersea, or Battersea better than Chelsea. But as London is now constituted, if Battersea sees anything in Chelsea in which it thinks Chelsea is better than itself, it will break the tenth commandment; and so Chelsea and Battersea will try to beat each other. Thus the spirit of civic emulation is aroused, which is a healthy sign in such a commonwealth as ours. When the people's representatives spend the people's money they will not spend too much, and they will endeavour to spend it to the best purpose.

All this points to the greater development of municipal life. It seems to me if anybody casts his eye over the general trend of human affairs, he will see that individuals have a tendency not to become so conspicuously rich,—in fact, to become poorer,—and that the one purse which can afford to build and spend money is the municipal purse;

and I take it that, if we have to found any hopes on the beautifying of London, these hopes must rest rather on municipal or public expenditure than on the construction of their private palaces which used to be the pride of our citizens and aristocrats. Still, I say I hold this to be a wholesome change. It is a thing which we must welcome; but it is a thing also which we must watch. We are municipalising a great many things, and I think that so far as we have gone municipalisation has been an unmixed benefit. But it is not a principle of unlimited application. I do not know how far my friend and colleague on my right would be disposed to go in that direction. I daresay he would go a great deal farther than I should. But what I should deprecate is what I sometimes think is a danger in the near future, which is the municipalisation of the individual. I sometimes think that in this great desire that all should be good in common, and in that great energy which is expended on behalf of public objects, particularly aided by journalism and particularly aided by natural curiosity, the privacy of the individual is disappearing. I do not think that this appeals to my audience as much as it does to me. But I think it may appeal more to Mr. Burns than to most of us. I take it that no man can act in a public position without feeling

that his life has ceased to be his own. That, no doubt, has always, to some extent, been the case with all public men. But they had some private life. When I read the newspapers it seems to me that the private life of a public man has ceased to exist. I seem to know everything that Mr. Gladstone does, from the moment he rises in the morning to the moment he goes to bed at night. I take it that if any man of equal eminence should arise, he would have to divulge every act of his life to the prying gaze of publicity. Is this entirely a good thing? Have men who work for the public no right to retirement and repose? Have they not a right to meditate, which they can hardly do in public, more especially when their meditations may be supposed to be on behalf of the public? I do not know where you are to localise the sort of literature to which I allude—the literature which makes common the life of every man, and which is only the supply to meet an irresistible demand. But I do hope that those who find any fascination in it will offer a grain of sympathy to the subjects of that literature. I will, however, after this protest against municipalising everything, give what blessing I have to give to the municipalisation which has been done hitherto, and therefore I come here to-day to say—Honour and good-luck to Battersea. May Battersea

prosper in the path she has pursued, on which so signal a milestone has been placed to-day, and may she further cover this Lavender Hill with the buildings which she needs, and which will meet the common wants of all.

THE PREDOMINANT PARTNER

In the House of Lords, 12th March 1894

MY LORDS, my first duty in the position which I now unworthily occupy is to return the thanks of Her Majesty's Government to the noble Lords who have moved and seconded the Address to the Crown. I will not dilate on either with the discursive interest displayed by the noble Marquis. But I will say that I fully appreciated the knowledge and the zeal with which the mover applied himself to the consideration of a subject of which he is a master, and on which we shall hope to hear his sentiments whenever the Bill dealing with the ecclesiastical establishment in Wales comes before the House. I must also say a word in passing upon the singular charm with which my noble friend the seconder invested the often *jejune* task of seconding the Address. I have also, as they have, the need for asking your Lordships' indulgence. We on this side of the House meet under the shadow of a great grief. A week ago we had, perhaps, the greatest leader that any

party has ever been led by. The tribute of the noble Marquis to his merits, his character, and his genius left nothing to be desired on this side of the House. Everyone can appreciate the greatness of Mr. Gladstone's character and attainments, but there is one aspect of his career which makes his retirement especially pathetic and interesting. I mean the long reach over which his recollection passes. He heard the guns saluting the battle of Waterloo, he heard some of Mr. Canning's greatest speeches, he heard the Reform debate in 1831 in this House, and Lord Brougham's memorable speech. He was, over half a century ago, the right-hand man of Sir Robert Peel's famous Government; and when to this coating of history which he acquired so long ago is added his own transcendent personality, one cannot, it seems to me, help being reminded of some noble river that has gathered its colours from the various soils through which it has passed, but has preserved its identity unimpaired, and gathered itself in one splendid volume before it rushes into the sea. The reason is one specially personal to myself, because it is I who have been forced, as it were, by a call which I could not honourably refuse, to stand in his place, and not merely in his place, but in the place of the noble Earl the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to whose consummate

leadership of this House I was glad to hear a universal tribute paid this afternoon. The noble Marquis complained of the brevity of the recitals and narratives of her Majesty's gracious Speech. I gather that his notion of what a Queen's Speech should be is this, that it should contain a chronicle of all that has taken place of interest in foreign affairs, at anyrate since Parliament last met. On this occasion, by that test I think that this Speech would fairly meet with a favourable judgment.

It is only a week since Parliament separated, and if we had chosen to confine ourselves to the austere rule which the noble Marquis has laid down for the Speech, we should indeed have had less to record than the meagre narrative of which he complains. I do not believe—and I am guided to some extent by my recollection of the speeches that were presumably composed by the noble Marquis himself—that it is necessary on these occasions to put into the gracious Speech from the throne all the most material affairs which have taken place in the year and within the control of the Foreign Office; but, as the noble Marquis has pointed out some omissions which he thinks are of importance, I will endeavour, so far as my imperfect knowledge goes, to supply the deficiency. He misses any mention of Siam. The acute part of the Siamese crisis was over last

August, and it hardly seemed worth while to resuscitate that transaction for the benefit of Parliament in the month of March 1894. But as respects Siam there is not very much to report. The negotiations for a treaty between France and Siam came to a conclusion, and as soon as the articles of that convention have been executed by the Siamese Government we are assured that the place of Chantaboon, which was occupied as a guarantee for the execution of those provisions, will be evacuated by the French Government. There is no provision of which I am aware in that convention which remains unexecuted except the trial of the alleged murderer. The trial is now in progress, and I do not doubt when it is concluded that the French Government will fulfil its engagements. Her Majesty's Government are fully aware of the responsibility imposed upon them by the fact that the commerce of Siam is almost entirely British, and we have taken due note of the assurances of the French Government, made not less to myself than to my predecessor in office, that the boundary of French and English influence is divided by the Mekong River. Then the noble Marquis touched upon Matabeleland. Of Matabeleland I confess I do not know much more than the very ample reports which have been published in the daily press. I do not know much more

than that the campaign has been conducted with singular courage, singular skill, and singular success; and that the settlement of the territory so acquired is now in process of completion under the auspices of my noble friend the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Then the noble Marquis wanted to hear something about Egypt. I might almost say the same of Egypt, that there is not much more to report than has been duly narrated in the papers. Perhaps, indeed, there is not so much. But at anyrate, this may be said, that Egypt is tranquil and is prosperous. Certain incidents which have occurred within the last fourteen months have given us grave reason to doubt the permanence of the institutions which we have established in that country. They will no doubt need the vigilant supervision of this country for some time to come; but I am happy to say that peace reigns in Egypt, and that we have, so far as I know, no cause for anxiety in that country. Then there comes the last point to which the noble Marquis directed my attention, the question of Uganda. Here I cannot but say one word as to the irreparable loss that is associated with that region—I mean the death of Sir Gilbert Portal. He had that singular combination of talent and chivalrous courage which make some of our younger English diplomatists

almost matchless agents for the prosecution of such work; and it was a heavy blow and a great discouragement when, at the termination of his arduous pilgrimage, he, without having orally communicated his views to us on the inquiry which he had prosecuted, returned to this country to die. That melancholy event must have in itself a delaying effect on the publication of our scheme with regard to Uganda; but I can promise the noble Marquis that in a very short time, when the supplementary vote comes to be asked for for the purposes of Uganda, a full exposition will be given of the policy of her Majesty's Government, and that papers will be laid on the table in ample time to give an opportunity for discussion on the subject.

The noble Marquis devoted some pungent remarks to the domestic legislation of her Majesty's Government. He said that it embodied some well-known programme—I am not sure that it does so fully as he thinks—but that it embodied some well-known programme so completely that it was only necessary for us to put after our insufficient foreign narrative, and our allusion to the estimates, "The domestic programme as per previous." The noble Marquis also says that so long as we were in office we seemed to think that there was room or believing that that programme would remain

substantially unimpaired, because of our want of success in bringing it into legislation. No one knows better than the noble Marquis what has been the obstacle against which most of our legislation has been wrecked, and I confess I thought it showed a disregard of appearances on his part, if I may say so, when he threw this in our teeth, having himself been the main object and primary cause of why we have not passed more Bills. He alluded with an air of humorous regret to the absence of shorter Parliaments from our scheme. As long as the House of Lords deals with our Bills as it has been dealing with them lately, it is not shorter but much longer Parliaments that we require to carry our measures. As regards the particular item in question, it is no doubt an important one, but it is not so pressing as others that are mentioned in the gracious Speech; and I think we were of opinion that, having set forth our legislative desires and ambitions in the Speech of last year, it might be necessary to curb our exuberance to some extent this year, and to keep some *bonne bouche* for a new Session. The noble Marquis complains of the absence of the Bill for conferring additional powers on the London County Council. I can reassure the noble Marquis. I am quite sure that he wishes to see that creation of his Government fortified with every power that

the Legislature can give it, and I am quite sure that this House will second the anxious wish of the House of Commons to provide it with all the authority with which it can be provided. Though it is not mentioned in the gracious Speech, that Bill will be introduced. I am not sure whether it will be introduced in the form of one Bill or of several Bills, but the noble Marquis may allay all his fears, for it will soon be presented to the other House of Parliament. The noble Marquis touched on the question of the Church Establishment in Wales and Scotland. I do not propose —and perhaps there may be some feeling of relief at the announcement—to follow my noble friend the mover of the Address, who is so much more conversant with the subject of the Church Establishment in Wales; nor do I even wish to deal on this occasion—because, as the noble Marquis has truly observed, I may have occasion later in the week, and in a more appropriate place—to deal with the case of Scotland. I do not put the case of Wales and Scotland exactly on the same basis. The case of Wales is the demand of a country so great as to be almost unanimous for the removal of a branch of the Church of England, which is alien to it, and is therefore, as we are advised, doing far more harm than good to the cause of religion. The case of Scotland, on the other hand

is a case of a creed substantially identical, divided into two parts by a hard-and-fast line, of Church Establishment and Non-establishment, and it is for that reason that I cannot put the question of Scotch Disestablishment on precisely the same footing as Welsh Disestablishment, and have so far curbed the patriotism with which the noble Marquis justly credits me as to advise her Majesty to put it second on the list. Now we come to the point which, after the bandinage of the noble Marquis's speech, lay evidently deep at the bottom of his heart and convictions, I mean the question of Ireland. That is a question which we have no desire to shirk or to evade. We did not omit it from the Queen's Speech from any idea of that description. We omitted all mention of the Home Rule Bill because, unlike last year, it is not our intention to propose a Home Rule Bill in this session of Parliament. The noble Marquis, with the innocence which pervaded his remarks on other subjects of legislation, said: "Why do you not propose a Home Rule Bill? Why do you not put the Irish peasants out of their pain? Why do you prolong this contest, so irksome to us and so distressing to them? Why not again employ this session in passing a Home Rule Bill through the other House of Parliament?" I should have thought that the answer to that would have been

sufficiently obvious to all who have the honour of sitting in this House. I should have thought it was sufficiently obvious that it was enough for the House of Commons in one session of many months to have spent its whole time in passing an elaborate measure only to be met in this House with so cruel a reception. It does not appear to me to be the mere function of the House of Commons to prepare and pass Bills simply in order to furnish sport for the House of Lords. If that were our idea, I cannot conceive a better course to adopt than to accept the advice of the noble Marquis, and to begin at once with our Home Rule Bill; to postpone all legislation for England, Scotland, and Wales for one more year in order to have the pleasure of bringing it up again in the month of September to be rejected once more by a majority of some 440 members of your Lordships' House; and, I suppose, when that had ensued, that at the beginning of the next Session the noble Marquis would urge the same reason for then adopting a similar course. There is another alternative, which the noble Marquis has not explained. We might appeal to the country. My Lords, to the country we shall not be afraid to appeal when the time is ripe in our opinion. But I will give him one conclusive reason why we will not appeal to the country at his invitation.

That reason is, that we will never concede the right to this hereditary House to enforce a dissolution.

The noble Marquis spoke of the lapse of time that it would require to bring into operation the only two remedies for Irish discontent, of which he appears to be the sole repository. He said they might take long, and I presume that while they were in operation it would be necessary for their due elaboration that we should keep a Conservative Government in office. But, my Lords, I would venture to remind him that his most illustrious predecessor in office, a Prime Minister on his own side of the House, made a speech once on that very subject, a most remarkable speech, which has some bearing on the question of time. It was Lord Beaconsfield's speech in the House of Commons delivered in February 1844. He pointed out then what were the true causes of what he called the Irish question, and he pointed out that the ills of Ireland were ills that in other countries would be remedied by a revolution, but that in this country it should be the task of Government by policy to remedy them. He pointed out that if you produced equality of creed, if you redressed the iniquities of Irish administration, in fifty years you would have a happy and contented Irish peasantry. My Lords, last month the fifty years

expired, and I do not know, although the Conservative party have had their due share of power during those fifty years, that we are so very much nearer the happiness and contentment which Mr. Disraeli pointed to. If we have any signs of happiness and contentment in Ireland,—and I am glad to say that in eighteen months those signs have multiplied and increased,—those signs of happiness and contentment are not due to the light railways and other remedies that the noble Marquis adumbrated, but to the hope held out by the Liberal party that the great boon of local self-government for purely local affairs, so far as it is consonant with the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament, would not be long delayed. My Lords, the figures as regards agrarian crimes which have been supplied to me are so remarkable in themselves that I will trouble your Lordships with them. In 1893 there were, exclusive of threatening letters, 207 cases of agrarian crimes in Ireland, or, inclusive of threatening letters, 308 cases of agrarian crimes in that country. Now, the figures of 1893, under either head, are the lowest since 1878—fifteen years ago—when the totals were, without threatening letters, 181 cases, or with threatening letters, 301 cases of agrarian crime. I think, then, whether you do or do not attribute this decrease in crime to the same cause as we do, her Majesty's Govern-

ment have some ground to be contented with the present condition of Ireland, and have at anyrate a right, after being some twenty months in office, to put it down to the policy they have pursued, and to the wise and just administration of Mr. John Morley. The noble Marquis made one remark on the subject of Irish Home Rule with which I confess myself in entire accord. He said that before Irish Home Rule is conceded by the Imperial Parliament, England, as the predominant member of the partnership of the three kingdoms, will have to be convinced of its justice. That may seem to be a considerable admission to make, because your Lordships will know that the majority of English members of Parliament, elected from England proper, are hostile to Home Rule. But I believe that the conviction of England in regard to Home Rule depends on one point alone, and that is the conduct of Ireland herself. I believe that if we can go on showing this comparative absence of agrarian crime, if we can point to the continued harmony of Ireland with the great Liberal party of this country, if we can go on giving proofs and pledges that Ireland is entitled to be granted that boon which she has never ceased to demand since the Act of Union was passed, I believe that the conversion of England will not be of a slow or difficult character.

My Lords, the question of Home Rule is one that I regard not from the point of view of Ireland only. It has for me a triple aspect. It has, in the first place, the aspect that I believe that Ireland will never be contented until this measure of Home Rule be granted to her; and that, though you may come in on other issues and succeed us who sit here, your policy of palliatives is bound to fail. In the second place, I believe that not merely have we in our Irish policy to satisfy those who live in the island of Ireland itself, encompassed, as Mr. Disraeli once said, by that melancholy ocean—we have not merely to satisfy the Irish themselves within Ireland, but, for the good of our Empire and for the continuity and solidarity of our relations with our brethren across the Atlantic, it is necessary that we should produce an Irish policy which shall satisfy the Irish people. And lastly, I view it from the highest imperial grounds, because I believe that the maintenance of this Empire depends, not on centralisation, but on decentralisation, and that if you once commence to tread this path, you will have to give satisfaction under the same conditions certainly to Scotland and possibly to Wales, not in the same degree or possibly in the same way, but so as to relieve this groaning Imperial Parliament from the burden of legislation under which it labours. I will not

detain you further on this subject to-night. I did not mean to dilate so much on the question of Home Rule. The noble Marquis has, at anyrate, the satisfaction of eliciting that declaration. I will only ask you, in conclusion, for that generosity which, in this House, whatever its legislative and constitutional defects may be, is the rule of political warfare. We stand before you a wretched remnant. As at Balaclava, so here, we have enemies in front of us, and more moderate enemies, I trust, to the right of us; and, from what I have recently seen, I am afraid that we have no very cordial friends there [pointing to the episcopal benches]. But we stand before you in the confidence, not of our numbers here,—sorely crippled as we are by the loss of our leader, limited as we are in the number of our votes in this House,—we stand before you, confident, not in our own strength, but in the firm belief that we have a large measure of support from the people of the three kingdoms.

LIBR OF T BOM

THE PARTNERSHIP AND ITS NECESSITIES

[A "SECOND CHAMBER" MAN]

At Edinburgh, 17th March 1894

SIR THOMAS CARMICHAEL, Ladies and Gentlemen, —I should be made of stone if I could stand here unmoved this evening. As I stand here I think much less of the present than of the past; I think of the days when I first stood here by Mr Gladstone's side. In his immortal first campaign, in those autumn days in Midlothian, was there ever such enthusiasm as that? Was there ever so historic an election? Was there ever a moment so supreme—I will not say in the history of Midlothian, but in the later history of Scotland—as the night in George Street in 1880, when we were told that the victory was won, and in a moment a vast multitude filled the whole length of the street? The very memory of those days makes the pulse beat faster and stirs the blood. There is not a man here of you who mixed in

those scenes who will forget them as long as life lasts. There is not a man of you here who can remember those days who does not bear with him to the latest hour of his life the image of the great chief under whose standard we fought. We are here, so to speak, without him. We are here without him in the flesh, but not grieving as those Ephesians did with regard to Paul, that they should see his face no more, because we hope that many times yet it may be given us to see that august presence and hear that eloquent voice. If he is not here to-night, his inspiration is with us. There is only one change in the Government, and that a most lamentable one—the change in its head; and it is in the inspiration that we derive from him, and in the inspiration and encouragement we received from you, that the Government propose to proceed. There are many memories of those times which come over me, and some have gone. There was Mr. Adam, the pawky and sagacious wisdom of whose political character no one who knew it will ever forget. There was John James Reid, the genial and active agent who seemed to be everywhere at the same time in a hansom decorated with those colours that I see on your roof. Those are gone, and many others who lived in those days, but we have our local grand old man still with us, Sir John Cowan, whom the

Queen has lately been pleased to honour so much to our satisfaction; and we have, I doubt not, a generation of men as good as he and we who are growing up to fill our place in the better times to come.

There is one most embarrassing incident that occurs to me in connection with Mr. Gladstone's non-appearance here this evening, and it is that I am called upon to fill his place. I observe that my friend Sir Thomas Carmichael, one of the few faithful country gentlemen of Scotland, dwelt with almost unnecessary emphasis on the pride of the position of Prime Minister. So far as my short experience goes, it is rather an anxious than a proud position. You are called to drive the chariot of the sun, but you are not allowed even —as the unfortunate charioteer who attempted with unequal means to drive that chariot—you are not even allowed, if you are a peer, to get into the chariot at all. You can only view it from a safe seclusion, and murmur a distant blessing on the charioteer. Of course, that has very grave disadvantages. In the first place, it is a little difficult to explain yourself to an assembly of which you are not a member. In the next place, it is obvious that without explanation one is somewhat surprised to see that perhaps for the first time in one's life one's speeches are beginning to be read, and not

merely read, but a great deal read into them. It was a great gratification to me when I first discovered that my speeches were objects of interest to any human being but myself, and it was a novelty, it was an agreeable novelty; but it ceased to be agreeable when I found that my critics were not, I think, animated by that benevolence which alone makes criticism at all tolerable.

The other day, on the first night of the session, I had occasion to deal with the Irish question, and no man in my position can avoid dealing with the Irish question. I thought that I had dealt with it with absolute frankness and absolute perspicuity, and my critics admit that I dealt with it with almost too much perspicuity. But, unfortunately, the interpretation that they put upon my words was not that which I put upon them in my intention. What I said was that, if we wanted to carry Home Rule, we must carry conviction to the heart of England, and by those words I stand. They are a truism, they are a platitude in the sense in which I uttered them; but in the sense in which they have been interpreted they bear a meaning which I, as a Scotsman, should be the first to repudiate. Are we really to believe that in all the great measures which affect the partnership which is called the United Kingdom we are to wait the predominant vote of England? We could never

carry anything. Mr. Lecky will tell you in his *History*—extremely impartial, at anyrate, as regards the party to which we belong—Mr. Lecky will tell you that the first Reform Bill was carried by Irish votes, while the first Reform Bill was a much greater upheaval of the Constitution than any Irish Home Rule Bill can possibly be; but it was carried by Irish votes. The present Government exists in the same way, and has carried the Parish Councils Bill by Irish votes. We do not propose to sit on the banks of the stream of time, and watch that stream pass by until it shall run dry in an English majority for the cause that we espouse. What we mean to do is what we have been doing ever since the Home Rule Bill was introduced in 1886. We are trying to bring conviction to the mind of the partner in our partnership that has the greatest population and the most votes. That does not seem to me to be an entirely unnatural proceeding. My belief as regards the interpretation that has been put upon my words is that the London press knew I was a Scotsman, and they endeavoured to rub up their somewhat imperfect knowledge of Scottish usages, and they remembered that a rectorial election is decided not always by a plurality of votes, as I know to my cost, but by a majority in each of the four nations comprising the population of the university; and

putting two and two together they came to this conclusion, that what Lord Rosebery means is this, that no great constitutional change must be carried without a majority in each of the four parts of the United Kingdom, and in that way, while we have a majority of seventy against Home Rule in England, we are safe against any presentation of the measure.

I am obliged to point out some facts by figures which I candidly acknowledge I took from the *Daily News* this morning, as being more accurate than those with which I provided myself. I want you to understand from those figures that the operation which I indicated, of bringing conviction to the English conscience and the English mind, is one on which we have been engaged ever since 1886. What was the majority that was returned at the general election of 1886 against Home Rule in England? The English constituencies, boroughs, counties, and universities in 1886 returned 126 Home Rulers against 339 Unionists—a majority for the latter of 213. That was the English majority we had to knock down in 1886. In 1892 England returned 189 Home Rulers and 266 Unionists, showing conversion to have proceeded the length of reducing the Anti-Home Rule majority from 213 to 69. We propose to go on reducing the majority; we believe that we shall

reduce it. I go a good deal farther than some of my timid critics on my own side. I believe that even if I had said, what I did not say, that I demanded an English majority for Home Rule, that that English majority we shall get. I must point out that, if I had, however, meant that an English majority was necessary to the passing of Home Rule, I should have been uttering what is on the face of it an absurdity. I suppose that all our opponents will concede that if to the next House of Commons we brought a majority of 100 in favour of Home Rule, there would be a majority which would bring conviction to the minds of the House of Lords itself. But, as a matter of fact, if you look at the figures you will find that you might have a majority against you in England of 35 against Home Rule, and yet have that very majority of 100 which I have indicated in its favour. I will give you the figures as they came to me. There are 465 English members, and that is why I take the liberty of calling England the predominant partner. There are 465 English members. I would give 210 of those to the Liberals and 255 to the Conservatives. In fact, I underrated my own figures. I gave a majority of 45 in England against Home Rule, instead of 35. In Wales, out of 30 members I would give 28 to the Liberals and 2 to the Conservatives. You

laugh, gentlemen, but that is a very liberal proportion. In Scotland I should demand a little reconsideration of the present position. I do not think it is more than I have a right to expect. I should give ten Conservative members to Scotland. You think that is too many, but that only shows the native liberality of the calculations, and I would keep 62 for the Liberals; and in Ireland I would give the very reasonable concession of 18 to the Conservatives, and I would keep 85 to the Nationalist party. There is nothing unnatural in those figures, except in so far as they relate to England, but you will see that by adding them up they give 385 Liberal votes in the House of Commons and only 285 Conservative votes; and yet in that very calculation, which goes largely on the figures as they were in 1885, there would be a majority of 45 in England against Home Rule. I think you will admit that if we can have a majority of 100 outside England, combined with a majority of 45 against us in England, it is not necessary to demand an English majority for Home Rule.

But I will tell you one reason, or rather two, why it is that I regard it of infinite importance, not so much to beat down the votes of England in this matter, as to convince the heart and the mind and the conscience of England. What is it on which that which is called, but erroneously called, loyal Ulster

bases its opposition to Irish Home Rule? It is on English opinion. If it were not for this English majority of 70 now in the House of Commons, Ulster would represent its natural and due proportion of the population of Ireland, and would submit, under whatever guarantees were thought right, to the proper domination of the majority in Ireland. But because it has England always at its back, with a majority of 69 at this moment and with a majority of 213 in the past, Ulster plays an utterly disproportionate part in the discussion of this great question.

There is another body which is more familiar to you even than Ulster, which also bases itself on the English majority—I mean the House of Lords. What is the position as regards the House of Lords? I want to be perfectly frank in this matter. I am not going to deal with the House of Lords in itself at this moment; I am going to deal with it on a particular occasion. I want you to understand me in saying that I think it is better to look the situation fairly in the face. Last year the House of Lords rejected the Home Rule Bill, which represented the whole time and energy of the House of Commons for the session, by a majority of ten to one. Under ordinary circumstances the country would have risen like one man against such an abuse of privilege. The country

did not rise like one man; and shall I tell you why it did not? Because the House of Lords was backed up by the English majority, which you and I are determined to reduce. Do you suppose that that transaction could have passed so unnoticed as it did had it not been that behind the House of Lords they knew that they had the strong but reducing majority in England? And it is for that reason, as regards Ulster and as regards the House of Lords, that we must address our efforts—efforts, I think, certain in the main to be successful—to reducing that majority of England against Home Rule.

I want to point out one curious circumstance connected with this incident on which I thought myself bound to dwell at such length. I do not believe for one moment that the misinterpretation of my utterances proceeded from the Irish party; I do not believe for one moment it proceeded from the Liberal party; and I have to consider what is the party that has an interest in sowing dissension between the Liberals and the Irish, and I come sagaciously to the conclusion that it is what is usually called the Unionist party, and I trace the misinterpretation—I am sure it was not an uncandid misinterpretation, but it was an unfortunate one—I trace it to its fountain-head, *The Times*, which said the morning after the speech that I had

at one blow shattered the fabric of Liberal policy; and some people who are not very wise thought it a good thing to get the most immediate source of Liberal inspiration from the columns of *The Times*. There was one other sentence in that speech, which seems not to have been altogether a happy one, to which I should like to call attention. I said that I believed the conversion of England would be quick, because in the main there was such an absolute freedom from agrarian crime in Ireland—a sentence which was caught up, but which I believe to represent the truth on that subject, because while Ireland is free from agrarian crime the people of Great Britain, many of whom are at present opposed to Home Rule, will more readily give that just boon. The other sentence that was criticised was this, that it depended largely on the close and intimate union of the Irish and the Liberal party. I attach the greatest importance to that. That union is close and intimate. It is perfectly true that we gave the whole of our first session of Parliament to the discussion of a Bill of Home Rule, but it is also true that during the autumn session, on a Bill which did not concern the Irish people in the least, and at vast inconvenience to themselves, these Irish members—many of them, most of them, poor men—tore themselves and dissevered themselves from their country

and their means of maintaining their livelihood in order to stand shoulder to shoulder with their English, Scotch, and Welsh brethren in the fight for the Parish Councils Bill.

I do not know that I need say much more about Ireland to-night. I have already—I think this is the third time on which it has been my duty to speak of that matter during the present week, but I will add one word, and it is this. I have often said—I have never made a secret of it—that I did not approach the Irish question entirely on historical and what I will call sentimental grounds. I approach it as a great question of policy which must be dealt with if you wish to deal with other questions. I approach it as an imperial question which concerns other populations as much as Ireland; and I for one believe—I speak now not as a Minister but as a man—that when we receive from Scotland that national demand which appears to be ripening so fast,—a national demand for that local power of self-government which would cause the business of Scotland, so long neglected in England, to be settled in Scotland—I as a Minister shall not be standing to oppose you in the breach, and if I am not a Minister, as a man I shall hope to be in the storming party. The first session of the present Parliament was an Irish session; the second session was an English session; and I

think it is not unfair to ask that the third session shall have a good deal of Scotland and Wales. For Wales you have a Disestablishment Bill, which is their only Bill, which they press forward with an energy and a passion which leave nothing to be desired, and which, I think, is entitled to as high a place on the list as human and political prediction give to any measure. But I think we have a very ample budget for Scotland. In the first place, Scotland will share in the new Registration Bill, which will put an end to the inequalities of the suffrage and to the disadvantages from which we perhaps have suffered more than any other part of the United Kingdom, and which must give effect fully and freely to the Franchise Bill of 1884. If Scotland could get that Bill as the result of this session she would be able to say to herself that she had passed many more unfruitful sessions than this. But I would next press on your attention the fact that at the earliest possible moment a Local Government Bill will be introduced for Scotland, which will extend to your villages and your parishes in a simple and inexpensive form, without, I hope, unduly multiplying elections, but putting the rural life of the country on a simple and reasonable basis, the advantages of the Parish Councils Bill for England. For the Highlands we offer a Bill which will extend the benefit of the

Crofters Act to leaseholders. For the miners and for those engaged in industrial pursuits we shall offer a Bill, which you will all understand here, for a public inquiry into fatal accidents in industrial pursuits.

We shall also approach and deal with a question which to many here comes first of all, the question of the Disestablishment of the Church of Scotland. There is no man who has Scotch blood running in his veins who does not feel the profoundest attachment to the Church of Scotland. It is part of our history; it is part of our character; we rest based on the Church of Scotland as Gibraltar is based upon its rock. The misfortune is that, owing to complications on which I have no time to dwell to-night, that Church is divided into three parts, all equally endowed with the graces of earnestness and of religion, but only one of them countenanced and supported by the State. It is for that reason that, unfortunately for the nation, and, as I conceive it to be, for the Established Church itself, that divison has been growing and growing. It has at last invaded the secular field of politics, until at last the Liberal party has been forced to the conviction that every manse, or nearly every manse, of the Established Church of Scotland is an agency for the Tory party, and that the continuance of the Establishment and of the

Liberal party in Scotland side by side are coming to be inconsistent. I, for my part, wish with all my heart that they had settled their differences among themselves. I wish with all my heart that, with no difference of doctrine that any ordinary eye can perceive, they could have found the opportunity to amalgamate once more into the National Church of Scotland. Some gentleman seems to prefer three Churches to one. I prefer one Church to three. I wish that they could have done that, and I go a little farther. You would not think it right of me to disguise the conviction that I have often expressed, which runs counter to many of those who wish for Disestablishment, but not to all, that a State, if it thinks it well to do so, has just as much right to maintain an Established Church for its own purposes and its own interests as it has to establish a standing army or any other institution that it thinks right. As long as I arrive at the goal at which my friends behind me wish me to arrive, I do not think it matters particularly the path by which I arrive at it. It is a reasonable path; it is an honest path; it is an honourable path; and when through the only means by which we can know the voice of Scotland on this matter, by the voice of its elected members, you see a majority of at least two to one in favour of Disestablishment, the question to which I have alluded

is one of mere candour on my part, and not of any practical importance whatever. There are, I think, two great principles in which we should be guided in dealing with the Church of Scotland. One is that of great tenderness and great indulgence, and in that, I believe, there is not one of the Disestablishment party who will not agree with me; and the other is that in dealing with the endowments they should not be torn from the places which pay them and which are really interested in their maintenance and care, and applied to found some great central institution in Edinburgh, Glasgow, or Dundee; but that they should remain parochial endowments for local and parochial and beneficent purposes. I have not yet exhausted what I have to say about Scotch business, for what I have now to say is, perhaps the most important item of all, which is this, that all Scotch Bills, in the opinion of the Government, should be referred with the least possible delay to a Scottish Grand Committee. I, as I am frequently reminded, know nothing of the proceedings of the House of Commons, and I willingly avail myself of that fact on this occasion. But I say this, that we have adopted that plan in the full belief that it is the best plan and the most efficient by which Scotch measures can be got through Parliament with the practised assistance of Scotsmen.

There is one Bill which, though not mentioned in the Queen's Speech and though not a Government Bill, is a Bill which affects Midlothian in a very remarkable degree, and which the Government are determined, not as a Government, but with the great mass, if not the unanimity of the Government support, to give every facility to. I mean the Miners' Eight Hours Bill. The Government will give that a day; they will give it every facility consistent with the work of the session; and they will, though they cannot at present—we have not had time to think of that—adopt it as a Government measure. They will spare no efforts as individual Ministers to secure its passing into law.

I have detained you long. Yes, but I do not know that I can go on much longer. I have detained you long; but I have retained two measures to the last, two questions which are of vital importance, not merely to Scotland, but to the people of these three kingdoms. The first is the question of the Navy. You will, I am sure, have seen with satisfaction that her Majesty's Government have determined to maintain the Navy on that footing of supremacy which is essential to our existence as a nation. I do not rest that point on any purpose of aggression. Great Britain has no purposes of aggression in

that matter. Her only aggression is commercial, and in the commercial aggression she meets with very considerable difficulty. But I regard this as a matter which is vital to ourselves, if we wish to feel absolutely secure in the enjoyment of the liberties that we have received and have had handed down to us, and which we are determined to maintain. I regard it also—and this is cognate to the office in which I have been encloistered so long, I mean in the Foreign Office—I regard it as the greatest guarantee we can offer for the preservation of European peace, because with a strong England—and England can really only be strong in her Navy, for her Army, as compared with the armies of the Continent, is a negligible quantity,—an England strong in her Navy—I began my sentence with Great Britain, and England crept in as I went on—Great Britain strong in her Navy, and strong also, which is the greatest consideration of all, in her purposes of peace and disinterestedness, gives a guarantee to Europe which no other power can give of the necessity of maintaining peace, and thus will secure preponderating power on the side of peace.

The last question of all that I bring before you is one which also interests you, it is that of the House of Lords. I think you know that for many years past the subject of the House of Lords has

attracted my closest attention. I have been a member of it,—and from within, even better than from without, you can see the danger of the proceedings of that body; but I have been a prophet "crying in the wilderness." No one has ever paid the slightest attention to me; and when I last called attention to the subject in a little weekly periodical in this very city, which I think was edited by my friend Mr. Train Gray—I forget the name of it, but it was evanescent and my article with it. When I last called attention in that article to the dangers which must inevitably flow from an hereditary House constituted as the House of Lords is, and led as the House of Lords is, I remember my friends all pointed out to me that I had wasted my power, that there was no subject so abstract and so illusory as the House of Lords; and when I predicted to them that at the very first of their great reforms they would come into violent collision with that House without any constitutional means of ending that House without its own consent, they simply laughed me to scorn. What is the result? Every danger that I saw in the House of Lords ten years ago has been gradually growing to a culminating point. I can very easily make this clear to you by a single example. I am a Second Chamber man. I believe in a Second Chamber if it be a good Second Chamber.

What I complain of in the House of Lords is that during the tenure of one Government it is a Second Chamber of an inexorable kind, but while another Government is in it is no Second Chamber at all. Every workman in Scotland knows why the Employers' Liability Bill is not law to-day. Every workman in Scotland knows it, and puts it down to its true cause; but I suspect every workman in Scotland also knows that if the Employers' Liability Bill had been presented to the House of Lords by a Conservative Government, it would have passed on oiled castors, without the slightest hitch and without the slightest difficulty. Therefore the result, the effect of the House of Lords as it at present stands, is this, that in one case it acts as a court of appeal, and a packed court of appeal, against the Liberal party; while in the other case, the case of a Conservative Government, it acts not as a Second Chamber at all. In the one case we have the two Chambers under a Liberal Government; under a Conservative Government we have a single Chamber. Therefore I say that we are face to face with a great difficulty, a great danger, a great peril to the State. When I first began to agitate this question, we were, perhaps, a third of the House of Lords. Since then, by frequent creation and frequent conversion, we are reduced to a tenth of the whole number, and not, I think,

always a tenth. But is it possible to believe that in these days, with the democratic suffrage that we have established, that a House of Commons, elected by the democratic suffrage, will suffer itself to be constantly thwarted, hindered, and harassed by the action of an hereditary Chamber, in which the proportion of Tories to Liberals is no less than ten to one? We are told that heroic measures may be recommended. We are, in fact, face to face with that last week in the House of Commons, when a resolution, not, I think, conceived in a very serious or practical spirit, was carried on this very question. But it was carried by a majority of two, and what I deduce from that circumstance, as to which one hardly knows whether to laugh or to cry, is that there was no feeling contained in the majority against the present Government. Quite the reverse. How strong, then, must be the feeling against the House of Lords, that could make so many Liberals put the Government into a minority. Gentlemen, I say that that is a great danger to the State. I have been talking of remedies for many years past, constitutional remedies, remedies within the four walls of the Constitution. I have not been able to find them, for the simple reason that a Bill to be legal, whether as modifying or as going farther with the House of Lords, must be passed through

both Houses of Parliament before it constitutionally becomes law. But I leave that subject to your serious consideration. If it is to be dealt with by the present Government, it can only be dealt with with the backing, and on the summons, and on the inspiration of a great popular feeling. Without that backing, without that inspiration, and without that summons, we in this matter are absolutely impotent. We await your guidance and your direction, and when we have it we shall be prepared to take what measures you may inspire.

There is, however, one other subject connected with the Legislature which it would not be candid in a peer to omit on this occasion. I have indicated to you one or two of the reasons which have greatly shaken me in my attachment to a Second Chamber. There is another reason which I touch upon with the more delicacy, as it concerns a House to which I do not belong. One of the great arguments in favour of a Second Chamber is that it retards the too hasty progress of legislation. In my opinion the too hasty progress of legislation is one of the very last things which is to be feared from the constitution of the House of Commons. You and I are outsiders as regards that House. We only know that there is encrusted upon its original constitution a whole series of standing orders, and bye-laws, and customs, and rulings,

which are like those constitutions of the Byzantine Empire which at last prevented anything being done in the East. I venture to think that while the House of Commons is calling loudly and calling justly for the mending or the ending of the House of Lords, it might look, as it certainly does not contemplate its own ending, to its own mending, and give us some revisal of its constitutional procedure which will enable Bills to be passed without the intolerable obstruction which is in the power of any energetic minority, however small it may be.

I do not propose to say another word to you upon politics to-night. I have spoken beyond my tether, and I do not propose to continue. I venture to tell you that, whatever reports you may read in *The Times* or in *The Scotsman*, the bulletins of the health of the present Government are those that you often receive on interesting occasions, "as well as can be expected." It is as well as can be expected under the circumstances, that it has lost its immortal head, and it has had within ten days to replace him, to reconstitute itself, and to face Parliament. Was ever a Government placed in so terrible a difficulty? Was ever a Government met—I venture to think, in the press and in Parliament — with so little of generosity or of consideration? There was an attempt made to

which I have recently alluded—a harmless and possibly a beneficent attempt in intention—to strangle the babe in its cradle. There is, I know, a not too benevolent spirit in certain circles, if they are large enough to be called circles, to the present Government, but we view the situation in a spirit of cheerful confidence. We know that we have the country behind us. We trust in the generous spirit with which the country, if not Parliament, views a young Government brought into the world under such unexampled difficulties. We know that the country also will not give credit to the aspersions so sedulously put forward — that the Government which had only lost one member was prepared at a moment's notice to march over to the enemy, bag, baggage, artillery, officers and men. There was an incident at the battle of Leipsic which turned the fortune of that battle. The Saxon army on which Napoleon depended for a great operation against the Allies made the great operation, but it made it in favour of the Allies. It marched over completely with all its arms and ammunition of war, and joined the Allies and defeated Napoleon. That is not our conception of the policy that we have inherited. That is not our conception of our duty, and I think that those papers who thought they would do us a service by indicating that we were prepared at a moment's

notice to leave every sentiment of honour and policy in abeyance, and to march over to the other camp, must have misconstrued either our sense or our conscience. I see it also reported that I have come here on an illegal visit, for the purpose of influencing the election for the Leith Burghs. I have a very great respect for the Leith Burghs, and I have a very great respect for their representative, but I am bound to say that this visit to Edinburgh was planned before I knew that there would be an election for the Leith Burghs, and before I knew that their representative would do me the honour of forming a part of the present Government. I believe that I am strictly within the limits of my right in speaking within the city and county of Edinburgh at any time that I may think fit, when there is no election for the city and county in progress. What are the disabilities of a peer to be? I am denounced as being a lonely oligarch in an inaccessible House; but I begin to ask myself if I am not a sort of state prisoner whose movements are watched, and who, before he takes a ticket for any particular place, must consider within himself whether an election for the House of Commons is being held within a certain radius of the railway station. All that is nonsense, and the Unionists know it to be nonsense. But after all, if I had to go anywhere, where should I come

to but here? As a matter of fact, my lips were sealed until I had been in Edinburgh. I felt that in this new and strange position, which has so suddenly devolved upon my feeble shoulders, I must come first to you. If I have a home, you represent that home to me. You first sent me into the world of politics. You made me what I am. You have associated yourself with every incident of my life. You have rejoiced with my joys; you have mourned with my griefs. Could, I then, do anything else than, at this supreme crisis of my fate and my fortune, come to ask you once more for your "God-speed," your blessing, for your encouragement on the arduous task that I have undertaken?

THE GOVERNMENT OF LONDON

At St. James's Hall on 21st March 1894

MR. CHAIRMAN,—I love that designation; it is familiar to me from some of the pleasantest associations of my life. I thank you warmly for this magnificent address that you have presented to me. It shall remain with me as long as life, and I trust that those who come after me will regard it as a precious possession. It is, after all, the greatest proof anybody can get of the confidence of any body of men, that he should have worked with them, in hourly and daily relations, in facing some of the great problems of life. I am glad that you in your speech laid so much stress on the fact that I am here, not as an hereditary legislator, but as a member for a constituency as populous, as democratic, as thoroughly working-class as any that is represented in the House of Commons; and one which I gather, from the cheers with which its name is always saluted, is not unrepresented in this assembly. Gentlemen, it seems to me that the election of a person at the head of the poll,

without canvassing, without an address, if I remember aright, is a sufficient answer to those gentlemen, weighty rather from character than from numbers, who have recently raised such objection to my hereditary position.

That position, advantageous in many ways, has always been a trifling obstacle to my public career. It was an obstacle when I was Under-Secretary in the Home Department. It was then found that that office was a dangerous one to be entrusted to a peer, and, under the pressure of public opinion, overwhelming, as I understand, on that subject, I had to relinquish it. It was then I took a solemn determination I would never relinquish another office on that objection. When I was elected Chairman of the County Council I sat for two hours listening to the most unpleasant discussion at which I was ever present,—a discussion which turned mainly on that objection,—and it was with a feeling of infinite relief I found that that cave was not so large as might have been expected. I remember looking over the names long afterwards, and I remember being struck by finding, I think without a single exception, they were the most cordial and friendly of all my colleagues, and had been from the first. Having, therefore, been beset ever since my entrance into public life with a perfect rabbit-warren of caves of that description, I am not

likely, in the face of the confidence of the electors of East Finsbury, to be seriously disturbed. You congratulate me to-night, however, not as member for East Finsbury, but as a Minister of the Crown. I see that put emphatically in the inscription which is opposite to me, entwined with those purloined primroses to which the Conservative party have laid so presumptuous a claim.

After all, it is not a far cry from Spring Gardens to Downing Street. I think that with a telescope of very moderate power my friend Mr. Hutton and myself might survey each other in our respective rooms; and as regards the transition from Spring Gardens to Parliament, which is, of course, the necessary first step, I remember at one time being a little alarmed, from the constant candidature of our councillors and their constant successes, that the County Council was only going to be used as a sort of channel and passage into the more imperial assembly of the House of Commons. I am not at all sure that, on a careful consideration of the respective merits and opportunities of both, there are not many who will not think that in the London County Council they have as great a scope for energy and practical action as in the Imperial Parliament of this country. I saw some influential letter in some influential paper objecting to this meeting on the ground that it was held in Holy

Week. I do not laugh at that objection; I see nothing to laugh at. If this were a meeting like some meetings, I should think there might be something in the objection, but I cannot see that it is alien to the true spirit of any week, however holy, that we should discuss together, if we can do so without intemperance or violence, those social and eternal problems which concern not merely the Council and Parliament, but the cause of humanity itself. There are dreams as noble, as sublime, cherished in the County Council as there are in any assembly in the world. I remember when I was last on this platform my honoured friend and colleague, Mr. John Morley, made an allusion, which in my opinion was completely misinterpreted, to young men who dream dreams. I believe, in the first place, it was misinterpreted because it was a misquotation from the Prophet Joel. I believe the true text, is "Young men will see visions," and it was understood from that that he meant to cast opprobrium on these young men; and there was a war, consisting, if I am right, principally of sonnets, which raged around this unfortunate expression. I do not think it was an unfortunate expression at all as it was intended, and I shall be prepared to adopt it to its fullest extent. I say young men will see visions, and I hope men who are no longer young will see visions,

because it is on the visions of the future that there is the best hope for the politics of the present. If I were in any way a painter, and could illuminate the address that you have presented to me to-night, and if I could introduce into my art all the castles in the air that I and you have built in Spring Gardens, I should produce some of the most magnificent specimens of architectural landscape that have ever been submitted to the Royal Academy. And when I and you cease to dream dreams it will be time for us to give up being municipal reformers. I remember very well when we built these castles in the air, and when we dreamt these dreams; and when we found that the Author of our being was not inclined to look kindly upon our aspirations we were inclined to sit down by the waters of Babylon,—I do not mean the river Thames by that,—and mourn our sad fate. Now, if you will allow me to say so,—and I say it of myself as much as of my fellow-councillors who at that time suffered under a sense of disappointment,—I think that disappointment was a very good thing for us, because it threw us upon the powers that we already possessed, and forced us to carry by administration many reforms which we otherwise might have neglected in the exercise of new and larger powers.

Now, what I want to point out is this, that we

of the County Council—though latterly I can claim but a very small share of merit in connection with it—have effected enormous changes and enormous reforms, not by legislation, but by administration; and having effected these enormous reforms by administration, we are now capable, when legislation comes, of undertaking new reforms under the new powers that will be given to us. I cannot go into detail to-night. I have not time, and I would not condemn you to the suffering of sitting in this atmosphere listening to a detailed account of the work of the London County Council, because the enumeration even of some of the benefits that we have conferred upon this metropolis would take up pretty nearly all the time till midnight. But at anyrate I can touch upon one or two of the points which I think will make every Londoner feel how much he owes to this new body, and how much to the spirit that animates it. I will take first the necessities of life. I will take air. What has the London County Council done for air? It has given you a thousand acres more air space in London. It has added to the open spaces of London, which were already not insignificant, and it has saved from building for posterity no less than a thousand acres of ground. I think that if the County Council rested its fame and its fortunes on that fact alone, it would have no insignificant

claim to your gratitude. As to water, we have not been so successful, but it has been from no want of energy on our part. In our humble opinion—we do not wish to criticise—the Royal Commission that sat on that question took too inadequate a view of the wants and the future of London. But at anyrate we are doing two things. We are negotiating, as I understand, with the water companies for the acquisition of their rights if they can be obtained on just and moderate terms, and we are also determined to guard those great unexhausted sources of water supply, wherever they may be, which may some day be wanted for the imperial wants of the metropolis. And as for food and as for warmth, what have we done? In the careful and accurate carrying out of the Weights and Measures Acts we have seen that the poor Londoner got fair weight and measure when he purchased food, and also when he purchased coal. And I believe that in a hundred and a thousand houses there would at this moment be found to exist a spring of gratitude that cannot be exhausted in exchange for this one bounty alone of the London County Council. Now, there is one other point on which the London County Council has perhaps done, in the opinion of most, a great deal more for the health and comfort of the people than even in the ways

which I have cited. It has refused to continue seventeen liquor licences, which it had obtained in the course of the acquisition of property for improvement, and though these seventeen licences represented a large sum of money, and therefore a great responsibility for the London County Council, the Council never shrank from doing what it thought right, and its action has been entirely endorsed. Now, I promised not to detain you by a long enumeration of the good works of the Council. I will not, therefore, dwell on the beneficent work that it has done in connection with the asylums for the insane and with the industrial schools under its care. I have a very strong opinion that of all the painful and distasteful work which devolved upon the London County Council the care of the insane is naturally the most painful and the most irksome; but our councillors have never shrank from the work. They have done far more than their office compelled them to do. They have mixed with their patients at their social gatherings, and they have done all that tender care and kindness could do to alleviate their life; and I, who have observed their work, venture to say that it is one of the brightest features in their record that they should have done so much for those unfortunate people. I suppose you care, not much less than for air and

for food, for immunity from the risk of being burned in your beds. The Fire Brigade of London has been immensely developed and improved in the various branches of which it consists, and under my friend Lord Carrington, who is going to undertake the chairmanship of that committee in conjunction with the Lord Chamberlainship and the care of the drama and a hundred other functions, I am quite sure that it will attain additional development.

But, after all, what the London County Council has done for you, and your homes, and your comfort, is not the largest part of its work viewed from an historical point of view. I regard, as by far the most important part of its work, influencing the politics of to-day and of to-morrow as to labour policy. When that labour policy was first introduced it was received with sneers and gibes in several quarters, but sneers and gibes carry no poison with them, unless they are dipped in truth, and the result of the working of this experiment has been to convince the most incredulous that, after all, the County Council was as wise as it was daring in the experiment it carried out. What was that policy? In the first place, it began by insisting that all contractors who did work for the County Council should pay their men a fair wage, and that they should not overwork them, a provision

directed against what is popularly and emphatically called sweating. Well, after all, though that policy has found great imitators, it has been mainly successful under the London County Council. In the next place, the Council determined to look after its own men; it determined that they should work shorter hours, and that they should be given a fair wage and fair conditions of work. I venture to say that good results will be seen in the well-being and contentment of the men; and again I say of that experiment it has had imitators in the most exalted quarters. The last experiment which they have undertaken is not the least daring one. They have determined, as far as may be, to do away with the contractor and the middleman. Again the prophets of evil wagged their heads, and again the prophecies of evil have been falsified, because, as a matter of fact, I believe it to be established that the work has been as well done as it was ever done by a contractor, and at a lessened cost of fifteen per cent. I say that this, as a record of administrative work for five years, can hardly be beaten. It is for that reason, if for that reason alone, I at this time do not regret that at the beginning additional powers were not devolved upon us, as we wished.

Besides these things, the County Council has made some great parliamentary exertions. It has

laid down some principles which will not be allowed to die until they are carried into effect. The first of these is the taxation of ground values. That is a principle which is becoming universally established, because I think at the last election, when the other party held their meeting in this very hall, the judgment of that meeting acknowledged that that was a sound and just principle. It is not a very easy principle to carry justly and simply into effect, but I have little doubt that with the brains now devoted to the application of it we shall soon arrive at a working result. The other principle to which I allude is the principle of betterment. That is not a new principle, but it has been allowed to lapse. It was a principle established in the reign of Charles II., and it was in operation during the clearances that followed the Great Fire of London; but, for good and sufficient reasons to those concerned, that principle was allowed to be forgotten for centuries. Well, that principle is now revived. You passed it through the House of Commons last year, and you sent it by a large majority elsewhere. Something happened there to which, on a non-contentious occasion of this kind, I do not wish to allude; but that has been followed by some extraordinary circumstances. The chairman of the Committee on the London Improvements Bill, which embodied

the principle of betterment, was a Conservative member for Manchester,—I do not name him to-night because this is a non-contentious occasion; but what has occurred since? He was strongly against betterment on that occasion; but this year the city of Manchester joins hands with the London County Council, and sends up a Bill containing the very principle of betterment which he had opposed; and the principal supporter of this Manchester Bill was the opposing chairman of the betterment committee of last year. While you make converts like that, you need not be very much afraid if for a session, or even for two, those large principles do not have immediate effect; and you may be quite certain that as long as her Majesty's present advisers are in power you will meet with very unflinching support in any honest and honourable proposal you have to make with reference to betterment or the taxation of ground values. And now, what have you got from the Government? That is rather a delicate question for me. We are always told that gratitude is a lively sense of favours to come. I do not believe the London County Council is animated by any feeling of that kind in presenting this address; but I always like to look things in the face, for fear there should be an insignificant minority in the County Council, animated by a feeling so con-

temptible as that. I should like to run over for a moment what has been our relation with the present Government. What were the conditions under which we have had to deal with the County Council? In the first place, we have been only twenty months in power. The first six months—I think with great good judgment, considering what was to follow—we enjoyed what our opponents were pleased to call a holiday, as we were not in the least likely to get a holiday afterwards. I am inclined to think that was one of the most judicious acts of her Majesty's Government. I had good occasion to know it was a holiday in name, but it was usefully spent in making many administrative reforms.

What is the first great trophy from the Government? It is the Commission for the Unification of London. Many of you may say, "Oh, another Royal Commission; we know what Royal Commissions are." But this is not a Royal Commission like other Royal Commissions, because it has established, once for all, the principle of the unification of London, and it is only now engaged in discussing the vast plan for carrying that principle out. I see that a very eminent municipal authority—I say it without any tinge of irony—has recently written a letter to say that he is in favour of six or seven municipalities for London.

I do not say that there may not have been a great deal to say for that proposal once, but the time for that proposal has gone. Indeed, I scarcely see how it ever could have been operative. What is it a municipality takes pride in? It takes pride in its administrative functions, in its police, in its fire brigade, and in the various departments which the great corporations of the country administer. Should we then in London, under this precious scheme, have seven police forces, seven fire brigades, seven various organisations; and if we had not seven organisations, what is the use of calling them municipalities? They would have been simply glorified District Councils federated into one, and the unification would have been complete in one sense, while it would have been as imperfect as it could be in another. If you had obtained that alone you would have done well by the present Government. But what did you get besides? You will remember the first session of Parliament was an Irish session, and, for reasons I will not expatiate upon, not so fruitful a session as we could have wished. The second session was devoted to rural England; but you got a very good slice out of the Parish Councils. You got the freedom of your vestries; you got the free election of your guardians; you got an extension of your powers, and you got one indirect advantage

which I do not think you have put so much to the front, which is, if, as we believe, these rural Councils give a new life to the rural villages, you will not be in the danger of a constant incursion of the rural population, who come in here to swell the roll of the unemployed, and to increase the number of the miserable and destitute of this city. I fancy, therefore, that out of the Parish Councils Bill you have got your share. You have got also a Bill which is to be introduced in a week or ten days, as I understand,—a Bill for the equalisation of rates. We did not get it through before, but we hardly ever get anything through, for reasons to which I will not further refer. But you may be certain of this, that we, to use another of Mr. John Morley's phrases, have nailed the Bill for equalisation of rates to the mast, and we intend to carry the vessel that bears it into port. Lastly, there was the constant support you got for your proposals for betterment and additional powers from her Majesty's Government whenever opportunity offered. I know that these do not satisfy ardent London reformers. It will be useless, with a faculty of looking facts in the face, to disguise the fact that among ardent reformers there was discontent at the slowness of the progress. I do not regret that discontent. I consider a satisfied reformer is a dangerous being. He contains very

much the same elements and character of danger that those derelict vessels do that are such a cause of peril to our commerce on the Atlantic. He is a floating obstacle; you never know where to find him; and, therefore, I hope we shall find in the London County Council a large proportion of hungry and discontented reformers, who will keep the Government up to their work. I remember very well that that discontent found vent in the usual channel of discontent — in an article in a magazine. Israel was bidden to proceed to its tents. "To your tents, O Israel," said the article, and the article was written in so genial and so witty a manner as to make me think that if I had had a tent I should have almost proceeded to it. I am glad to say that, on consideration, that advice was not followed. I do not know exactly what it meant, what it was Israel was to do in its tents; but I am certain that Israel was much better outside its tents than in them. It could do some good outside the tents; it could do precious little good in them. You remember that a certain person is always reported to find mischief for idle hands to do; and the idle hand in the tent is not less mischievous than the one out of it; and I rejoice, in spite of that spirited harangue, which was meant rather to act as a spur than a curb, that Israel continued to do its good work. I view all

that has been done by yourselves in administration and in the effort to promote principles of legislation, as important mainly for one circumstance, that it is another proof of those great and growing forces in legislation which are practically a growth of the last few years in this country, but which are swelling to colossal proportions, which cannot be longer ignored by any statesman, however highly placed he may be, and which are taking the place of those fossil politics—for there is fossil Radicalism as well as fossil Toryism—which are beginning to find too late that they are out of date. I should like to tell you for a moment that those forces affect not less the Government than the London County Council. While the Government was enjoying its holiday, and when the Government was enjoying the interminable debates on various measures which have occupied hours of its time, it has been in a manner treading in your footsteps, and endeavouring to do for their employees what you have done for yourselves. They tried to do something in legislation. They passed the Employers' Liability Bill; they passed it to where the limits of their powers ceased. They did pass a Bill for regulating the hours of railway servants—a Bill which was greatly required not merely for the welfare of those servants, but for the safety of the passengers on the railways. Now, what has been the effect of that Bill? The

great companies are gradually falling into line in accepting that Bill. One great company, I heard only to-day, is building eight new locomotives to meet the additional supply necessary to comply with the requirements of that Bill, and they are prepared to spend £15,000 a year in additional labour to bring their staff under it. Further, we have promised to give the Government support to an Eight Hours Bill for miners, the promoters of which, I believe, will not require facilities in the House of Commons in its first stage from the Government, but may not be unwilling to receive these facilities later, and I think that in itself is a recognition of the fact that the Government views this new force as a force on which it must base its support.

Then, besides these measures—I daresay I have omitted some—the State is endeavouring to become a model employer of labour itself. There was, if you remember aright, a resolution moved and carried in 1891, by a gentleman who ought to be a member of the County Council if he were not a member of the House of Commons and of the Government—I mean Mr. Sydney Buxton. His resolution, if you remember, was that contractors under Government contracts were to pay fair wages under these Government contracts, and wages and terms that could be accepted by trade unionists

and by trade unions. He carried that resolution in a not too friendly House of Commons, and it was given immediate effect to. What have we seen since this Government came into power? I am not sure that the first experiment of an eight hours day was not tried in the office with which I am now connected, which was then an office employing but comparatively few men—I mean the County Council Office. I believe it was Mr. Acland, who has done so much for the people in so short a time, who first put the eight hours term of labour into operation in the Education Office. He was promptly followed up by the War Office. The War Office employ, I think, some 18,000 or 19,000: I speak under correction. They proceeded logically to apply the eight hours principle to their men. They were encouraged by the success which has attended that principle in the works of Messrs. Mather at Oldham, and Mr. Allan at Sunderland; and the Secretary for War, Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, writes to me to say that, so far as they can judge as yet, the experiment has been a complete success. The men have their breakfast before they go to work, and they do their work on a full stomach, and therefore do it much better than they did before. They do not have to go away for breakfast, and they save the additional time that they work for the enjoyment of their homes and

their families; and, after all, the Government itself saves in fuel, fire, lubricants, and all that it expended money on in the additional hours of labour. Then you are aware that in the same way the Admiralty has now followed suit, and that in the vast dock-yards of this country an eight hours period will now be the rule in operation. I see some on this platform who are Fabians, some who hold advanced views on labour questions, and I venture to ask if they two years ago would have deemed it possible for one moment that such a step as this would have been undertaken by the responsible Government of this country with the complete assent and approbation of everybody.

I have not done with my Government budget yet. I am only going to give you a brief sketch of what we, or rather they, have done. There is the Home Office. The Home Office has at last become a Home Office, not merely in name, but in deed. I think that possibly it might be well, in the presence of one I see not far from me, who knows the work of the Home Office better than I do, if I dispense with any enumeration of what the Home Office has done. It is, I believe, sufficiently well known to you all. But as a matter of fact, in the multiplication of inspectors, in mines, in factories, and in quarries, in the appointment of female inspectors, in the regulation of dangerous

trades, and in seeking further powers, as he is now doing, for the further regulation of dangerous and unhealthy trades, Mr. Asquith, I believe, has beaten the record. Let me say one word about the Board of Trade, where my friend Mr. Mundella has once more been showing his zeal and his interest in labour questions. In the first place, he has thoroughly constituted that Labour Bureau which he administrated in 1886, and which he has now made the most perfect labour bureau, as I believe, in the world, the envy and the imitation of continental nations. With Mr. Giffen at the head, with Mr. Llewellwyn Smith as the chief labour commissioner, and with Mr. John Burnett as the chief labour correspondent, I believe that that Labour Bureau, with its numberless correspondents, male and female, in every industrial district, is perhaps the best equipped department of that kind that any Government has ever had. Then he has set on foot a new magazine, which is called the *Labour Gazette*. That *Labour Gazette*, if you have ever seen it, and I do not doubt many of you have seen it, is the most perfect compendium of all the facts that will interest labour that has ever been drawn up. If this Government had existed only for the purpose of producing the *Labour Gazette*, I venture to say this Government would not have lived in vain. Mr. Mundella had passed through

Parliament that very Bill for regulating the hours of railway servants to which I alluded. He has also on hand redrafting a Bill for introducing conciliation in labour disputes. Those of us who remember—and who does not?—the great labour conflict of last year, and the calamities it entailed upon us, the advantages it gave to foreign nations in the struggle of commerce, the calamities it entailed, as keen as those suffered from war, famine, and pestilence, will regret no step, however effectual or ineffectual, no attempt in the direction of further conciliation. All this is good in itself. I think it is a record of which any Government may be proud. I think your record also is one of which any municipal body may be proud. When you consider that the one body has only lived for five years and the other only for twenty months, you may say that no two such bodies have ever effected so much for labour in the time.

But if this is good in itself, it is infinitely more important, in my opinion, as a sign of that new spirit which is passing from municipal into imperial politics, which aims more at the improvement of the lot of the worker and the toiler than at those great constitutional effects in which past Parliaments have taken their pride. To what do you attribute that spirit? I attribute it to two things. In the first place, I believe as England has been

governed under various suffrages for the benefit of various sections, that, now the suffrage has been made accessible to all, it is about to be governed for all. In the next place, I believe in the further course of the lowering of that suffrage we somewhere or other lit up the conscience of the community. I believe that at last the community has awoke to its liabilities and duties to all ranks and classes. And I believe the people are now inclined to think that politics is not merely a game at which the pawns have to be sacrificed to the knights and the castles, but is an elevating and ennobling effort to carry into practical politics and practical life the principles of a higher morality. I believe that increasingly Governments will be judged by that test. I believe the people are coming to recognise that in that spirit alone must Governments be carried on. It is all very well to make great speeches and to win great divisions. It is well to speak with authority in the councils of the world, and to see your navies riding on every sea, and to see your flag on every shore. That is well, but it is not all. I am certain that there is a party in this country not named as yet that is disconnected with any existing political organisation, a party which is inclined to say, "A plague on both your Houses, a plague on all your parties, a plague on all your politics, a plague on your

unending discussions which yield so little fruit. Have done with this unending talk, and come down and do something for the people." It is this spirit which animates, as I believe, the great masses of our artisans, the great masses of our working clergy, the great masses of those who work for and with the poor, and who for the want of a better word I am compelled to call by the bastard term of philanthropists; and whether that spirit be with them or not—and I am convinced by conversation with many individuals it is increasingly so—you will find that that spirit will spread if Parliament is not able to do something effective. You will find it will spread higher and wider in the social scale; and I for one shall not despair some day to see a Minister, Prime or otherwise, who shall not scruple from time to time to come down from the platform of party and speak straight to the hearts of his fellow-countrymen, speak to them as Sir Robert Peel spoke to them when he was hurled from power for cheapening the bread of the people. Were that Minister here to-night he would, I imagine, ask you not to save his Cabinet or himself, but to make a great effort to save yourselves, to save yourselves by some noble, by some direct, by some effective action from the dangers that encircle a great population —the perils of violence, of crime, and the greatest

peril of all, the peril of ignorance. We ask you to rob no class, to rob no man; but we do say that, unless effective means are taken to deal with this enormous, this incalculable population which is growing up around us, half noticed, half ignored, there is a danger for England such as war has never given her, and which it is the prayer of this Government she may escape.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S LIBERALISM

In the Town Hall, Birmingham, 23rd May 1894

I AM more than grateful to you for this magnificent reception. I hope that it means by its fervour that you are prepared to follow up the acclamations of this evening by serious work in the country. This district bears no very good reputation—in our party. Any man who comes down to Birmingham and calls himself a Liberal is a subject of serious and tender warning on the part of his friends. For there is a general belief, which I believe is not totally unfounded, that you live under a sort of political martial law; that you are allowed for your morning reading of the papers nothing but doctrines which suit other politicians better than they suit you; and that, as a matter of fact, a supporter of the present Government is supposed to be a marked man in Birmingham. Well, all I can say is, looking here to-night, there must be a good many marked men in Birmingham. I always reply to the warnings and apprehensions of my

friends, that I was here not two years ago, and that I escaped without any serious disaster. I really don't know, gentlemen, why they should make such a fuss about any of us coming here. I received, indeed, a somewhat cordial welcome from my principal antagonist in politics in Birmingham, for he said that my visits brought him luck, and that the last visit had brought him a very remarkable increase in his normal majority. Well, if that be so, and I don't deny for a moment that it is so, he ought to welcome my appearance in Birmingham. I trust that on the next occasion that I come I shall receive an invitation from him, because so invaluable an ally as I have proved myself to him should not be without honour in his house. But, gentlemen, there is another reason why this meeting should be considered an innocent one. I know very well that to-night I am not talking to Birmingham, but to the Midland district.

But, as far as the Birmingham Liberal Association is concerned—and I take it that there are a good many of that much-decried body here in this hall—as far as that body goes, it is, if I may believe the last description given of it which I have read, so little to be feared, so little, indeed, to be dreaded, that coming to see the Birmingham Liberal Association is more a sort of harmless

tea-party than a political meeting. I read the other day with the greatest interest that, from becoming the leading organisation of this district, it had sunk to a mutual admiration society. Well, there is no harm in my coming to take my part in the converse of so innocent an Association. There is another body I see in Birmingham, sprung up on the ruins of this Association—the ruins! When I look at the faces before me, I see what a ruin it is—and that body has the same name with one trifling addition, which I have never been able to understand. It is not the Birmingham Liberal Association, it is the Birmingham Liberal Unionist Association. Now the Birmingham Liberal Unionist Association was informed by its president the other day that of course you were a mutual admiration society, and I know very well, having read the proceedings with much care, that that is not a mutual admiration society. There were only three speeches reported at that meeting, and as I was coming to Birmingham I did myself the honour, and underwent the penalty, of reading them all. I remember the more striking passages. One speaker said that of all the magnificent speeches that the president had ever delivered in that hall, and they were many, the speech he had delivered that night was perhaps the finest. The second speaker who was reported said, of the

president again oddly enough,—I do not understand this general adulation of the president, it was an accident I suppose,—said of the president that on no worthier brows was the wreath of political chivalry ever placed; and the president, in reference to that expression of opinion, said it was a speech which he himself in its excellence could not attempt to rival. Now, gentlemen, that is not mutual admiration. That is the fortuitous and irrepressible enthusiasm of some great and good men happening to meet in the same room. That is a very different matter from your position. It is a very different thing from mutual admiration, and I trust that you note and you mark the difference.

Well, but that is not the only difference between the new Association and the old. There is another difference between you and the Birmingham Liberal Unionist Association. You have not changed your principles; but the Birmingham Liberal Unionist Association—I love that name—if it does preserve its principles, prefers to vote against them. That may be, for all I know, some subtle form of political penance and political mortification—to stultify yourselves daily, to forget your political past, to digest your political principles, to denounce your political friends, and, in doing so, to inflict three lashes on your own back for every lash you inflict on theirs. That, I

venture to say, is a perpetual political Lent, and that is what prevents the Birmingham Liberal Unionist Association from being, even in its most hilarious moods, a mutual admiration society. I hope, gentlemen, that I do not disparage that Association in believing that it consists substantially of one individual. I suppose it is the greatest compliment that I can pay him to say that Mr. Chamberlain is that Association. But, gentlemen, what you have come to fight to-night is the Birmingham Liberal Unionist Association, incarnate in the person of its founder and of its president. So far as I am concerned, I have no personal feeling whatever against that gentleman. I have the sincerest admiration for his talents, particularly his political dexterity and his political agility. On many points of policy, of external policy, I believe we are in entire agreement, and I am certainly in agreement with one of the Mr. Chamberlains—I don't mean one of the brothers, but I mean one of the past political Mr. Chamberlains, as I find him recorded in his speeches—on many points of domestic policy. But, gentlemen, I think that is the enemy that you have to fight in this district, and you have in reality to fight no other. It is necessary on this inaugural occasion, at this commencement of what I hope will be a great and successful campaign, that we should

examine somewhat closely the policy and the declaration of the Birmingham Liberal Unionist Association. Now, there are three or four test questions before the country at this moment, three or four test questions, on every one of which, according to past pledges, we have the right to expect the undivided support, the enthusiastic support, of the Birmingham Liberal Unionist Association. And I will tell you why.

There is first the question of Disestablishment in Wales and Scotland. I believe that to be a cause dear to Birmingham and the Liberals of the Midland district. It is certainly a cause which the Government are determined to prosecute. You well know there are some voices on that question among our supporters which are not entirely harmonious. To that I will allude in a moment; for the present I am entirely confined to the attitude of the Birmingham Liberal Unionist Association on this question. With that object I will venture to read to you a passage, on which I formed my belief that we have a right to the support of that body of politicians on that question. In Glasgow, on 15th September 1885, Mr. Chamberlain said that "for political, as well as social reasons, and in the interests of religion itself, I am a Liberationist. I would free the Church from state control whether in England,

Scotland, or in Wales; and my opinion upon the subject is undoubtedly strengthened by my belief, that the appropriation to the service of a single sect of funds which were originally destined for the benefit of the whole nation is an injustice." Well, I think we have a right to expect his support on the question of Welsh and Scotch disestablishment; but I will tell you how the case stands with regard to his present attitude on Welsh disestablishment. He did not speak or vote in the recent debate that I know of, but what he did do was, in 1891, to write a letter which, I venture to think, is an historical one. He said he was convinced that "the only chance for the speedy satisfaction of the legitimate claims of Welsh nonconformity is to be found in the defeat of Home Rule. Every Welsh dissenter who votes for a Gladstonian at the next general election votes first for the indefinite postponement of Welsh disestablishment and land reform." Well, I say, gentlemen, that letter does not promise to us from the Birmingham Liberal Unionist Association the support we have a right to expect.

There is another question of great interest before the country at this moment, the question of the powers and prerogatives of the House of Lords. On that question you will see that a conference is about to be convoked at Leeds, a representative

conference for the sifting of that matter. Now, I attach great importance to the proceedings of that conference, and I will tell you why. It is a spontaneous movement; it is not associated with the Government. The first that I saw of it was in the newspapers, and therefore it is a movement outside the Government to give the Government the guidance and the inspiration of the Liberalism of the country as to dealing with this question, a guidance and inspiration which perhaps you may remember I formerly invited for the settlement of that great question. I venture to think that that conference will not separate without having pronounced emphatically for some limitation, probably a considerable limitation, of the powers and prerogatives of the House of Lords; and I believe that if they do that they will be acting wisely, not merely in the interests of the institutions of the country, to which the existence of the House of Lords administers a serious wrench, not merely in the interests of Liberal legislation in this country, but also in the interests, if it is to continue in any form whatever, of the House of Lords. Well, now, will this conference, whatever it may utter, will it evoke any echo in the bosom of the Liberal Unionist Association? It once spoke loud enough upon this question. I could, I suppose, bring a thousand extracts on this question from

the speeches of the president of that Association. But this will be perhaps sufficient: "This brings me to the second question. Are the Lords to dictate to us, the people of England? Are the Lords to dictate to us the laws which we shall make, and the way in which we shall bring them in? Are you going to be governed by yourselves, or will you submit to an oligarchy which is a mere accident of birth? Your ancestors resisted kings, and abated the horde of monarchs,"—"A horde," I think this must be a mistake, though I quote it from that very rare book, the original edition of the speeches of Mr. Chamberlain,—"and it is inconceivable that you should be so careless of your great heritage as to submit your liberties to this miserable minority of individuals who rest their claims upon privilege and upon accident. . . . They are ancient monuments, and I for one should be very sorry to deface them; but, gentlemen, I do not admit that we can build upon these interesting ruins the foundations of our Government." Now, what is the present position of that great Association on this question? I happen to know. The other day I went down to Edinburgh, and made a speech on my first holding my present position. That was on a Saturday. The *Scotsman*, which is the Liberal Unionist paper of Edinburgh, announced on the Monday that Mr. Chamberlain was con-

sidering whether he should accept an invitation of long standing from the Liberals of Edinburgh. On Tuesday he made up his mind to consent, on Wednesday he set out for the north, and on Thursday he made a speech. He was in such a hurry to get to Edinburgh that it seems to me he left the whole of his political baggage behind. He came to make a speech; I have read to you what he said on the subject of Established Churches and the House of Lords. He came on that occasion, and spoke as he said he was invited to do,—which means, I suppose, that his brief and his sealed orders were sent from Edinburgh; and without turning a hair this admirable practitioner delivered an animated defence of the Established Church and of the House of Lords. Now, gentlemen, that is a dexterity which I envy; it is an agility which I admire. But I venture to ask this great Association, this great meeting, whether it is not an imposition on the credulity of the Midlands to suppose that this is serious politics, or anything but the legerdemain of a wandering rhetorician.

Now I come to another great question which is before Great Britain at this moment. There is the Budget, to which my friend Sir Arthur Hayter alluded. The Budget I believe to be the most popular of all the Budgets that have been intro-

duced in my lifetime, and I think we have a right to expect, on that subject of finance at anyrate, the ardent and the uncompromising support of the Birmingham Liberal Unionist Association. What was it that the president of that Association said with regard to the main proposals now embodied in the Budget? Sir William Harcourt in his speech the other night gave one extract from the former financial speeches of Mr. Chamberlain; I will give you another. In 1885 he said at Birmingham that "if Parliament would only support the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if they would give him leave to equalise the duties payable on land and personal property when those pass on death and by inheritance, and if, in addition, they would consent to impose a higher tax on incomes exceeding a certain amount, I believe Mr. Childers would at once be able to remedy this injustice, and give you a free breakfast-table to-morrow." There you have the exact proposals of the Government in another form. You have the equalisation of duties on personalty and upon realty, and you have the graduation on large fortunes. Mr. Chamberlain, it is true, says from income, and in another place he corrects himself, and says it would be better to do it on the death, and therefore the proposal is substantially his own. But when the proposal comes before the House

of Commons, what happens? The voice and vote of Mr. Chamberlain are given, the moment his own proposals come in a substantive form, against the proposals.

Now, gentlemen, there is another question which interests the Liberal politicians of this country. It is what is popularly called the Registration Bill. It has another title; but I confess I cannot at this moment charge my memory with it. I daresay my friend Mr. Fowler will supply it when he comes to speak. I quite admit about the Registration Bill, that it has many omissions of provisions that I should like to see inside it. It has, for instance, not a provision for seeing that the payment of expenses should not fall on *bonâ fide* candidates, and I confess that I regret extremely that, owing to the necessity under present parliamentary conditions of not overloading that Bill too much and of giving too much subject of controversy in it, we were compelled to throw that provision overboard; but I am sure I may say on behalf of the Government that we will welcome any opportunity of giving effect to that provision whenever and by whomsoever it may be proposed, with all its necessary consequences, if time be given us; and some say we shall have but very short shrift. I suppose they have an idea of what is coming. But if time be given us, we, at anyrate, will not hesitate in the

next session to produce some provision having that object, for I quite admit that a Registration Bill which does not contain that provision is an imperfect Bill under the circumstances of the present time, and it will be an omission to be remedied without any very great delay. But, after all, the main provision of that Bill is what is called one man one vote. On that question, at anyrate, I felt that we could rely with certainty upon the voice and the vote of the Birmingham Liberal Unionist Association. In this city, in January 1885, Mr. Chamberlain said, "There is another question. I am in favour of the principle of one man one vote, and I object altogether to the plural representation of property. I will take my own case. I am a terrible example. I have three votes for as many borough constituences, and I have three votes for as many country constituencies. I use them on the right side."—You remember, gentlemen, this was said nine years ago, so you must control your emotion.—"I use them on the right side, but I know many of my friends who have ten or twelve, and I have heard of one reverend pluralist who has twenty-three."—I wonder if he is a member of the Birmingham Liberal Unionist Association?—"I consider this is an anomaly altogether inconsistent with the principle upon which we stand. That principle is that every householder, at all

events, has an equal stake in the good government of the country, and his life, his happiness, his property all depend upon legislation, which he is equally entitled with everyone else to assist in framing. If we are to make a distinction, I am not quite certain whether it is not the poor man who ought to have more votes than the rich one. For, after all, his interests are more direct than the rich man's, and if you have bad legislation it may lessen the income of the one, but it may destroy altogether the means of subsistence of the other." Well, ladies and gentlemen, there was another disappointment. After that, the most emphatic speech that has ever, I think, been delivered on behalf of the principle of one man and one vote, on a division our excellent friend went into the lobby against us.

I have brought before you now four great questions, perhaps the four chief questions which are before the country — the question of the Establishments of Wales and Scotland, the question of the House of Lords, the question of the Budget, and the question which is called "one man one vote." On all these, the views, the former views, of Mr. Chamberlain on all these questions have apparently disappeared like thin smoke in the air. I suppose we have the right to ask, What is the reason that a re-

sponsible politician is able to play such havoc with his pledges?

And we shall be told, I doubt not, that it is all because of the Irish question. It is the Irish question that poisons the springs of the Liberalism of the Birmingham Liberal Unionist Association; it is the Irish question which, I am afraid, will leave it very soon little but the Birmingham Unionist Association. Well, on the Irish question we are not without some lights also. But with regard to the Irish question, if you would allow me, I should extremely like to answer two questions which Mr. Chamberlain put to me on the occasion when he last spoke in Birmingham. I think if Mr. Chamberlain had thought over his questions before he put them, he would have hesitated before he put them, because he must have understood that to put such questions to a politician who at anyrate, however inadequate his abilities may be, is a man, I believe, of honour, and, I believe, of conscience, was as direct an insult as he could put to him. He said, "I will ask Lord Rosebery when he comes to Birmingham to speak with frankness (a Birmingham audience likes frankness), and I will ask him to answer two questions. One is, 'Is he in favour of Home Rule for Ireland?' and secondly, 'Is he in favour of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill of last year?'" Well, gentlemen, I appeal to you if

such questions put to a member of a Cabinet which was established on the basis of Irish Home Rule, —put to a Minister who was a party to bringing in Mr. Gladstone's Bill of last year, and spoke and voted on its behalf,—is not in the nature of a direct insult? I suppose it is difficult to make politicians of that school understand what the feelings of ordinary politicians may be. They are accustomed to say, with a wink, "That is his game," or with a leer, "Those are his tactics," or, "I think perhaps that will be the best manœuvre for us"; and at last, by this method of talking, they cheat themselves, as I hope, into a belief of their own dishonesty, and the dishonesty of others. But, gentlemen, that is a digression. When I was led away, I was talking to you about the hypothesis put forward by Liberal Unionists of Birmingham and elsewhere, that their Liberalism has been soured, like milk by thunder, by the sudden in-coming of the Irish question. They would be with us shoulder to shoulder on every question, but they cannot deal with that measure that is called treason and disunion.

Well, after all, I remember the time, and perhaps you remember the time, when the president of the Birmingham Liberal Unionist Association did not feel quite so acutely the treason and heinousness of any scheme of Home Rule. There was a time when he felt that the condition of Ireland was a

danger and a reproach to us; and this is what he says: "If the object"—this was in 1884—"if the object of the Government were to paralyse local effort, to annihilate local responsibility, and daily to give emphasis to the fact that the whole country is under the domination of an alien race, no system could be devised more likely to secure this object than that now in force in Ireland. We hold that the continuance of such a system is unjust to Ireland, useless to England, and dangerous to both. To England it is worse than useless, for while it has succeeded in irritating Ireland almost beyond endurance, it has resulted in preventing the Imperial Parliament from giving its attention to many useful reforms which we now stand in need of"—I suppose those are the useful reforms which I have mentioned, and which he has been voting against.—"Englishmen will not long consent to neglect their own affairs merely in order that they may meddle in other people's business." Well, gentlemen, one can hardly understand that any measure for giving Irishmen the control of their own affairs would have been such an insuperable obstacle to the Liberalism of the right hon. gentleman. But so it is. On an occasion two years ago—I think two or three years ago—he announced to us that he was a Home Ruler before Mr. Gladstone ever was. What is his Home Rule now? What is the

programme for Ireland of the Birmingham Liberal Unionist Association? They know their president is much too intelligent not to know that as long as Ireland blocks your path, all political progress is impossible. But he has a remedy at once. It is this. It is to reduce the representation of Ireland by twenty-three members. Nothing else. This is the message of peace and hope to Ireland which is extended by the president of the Birmingham Liberal Unionist Association. Just this much: it is as it were when a man struggling to get something which he believes to be vital and necessary for his own existence, it is as if you were to cut the man's hand off at the wrist, and tell him that you think that would help him to struggle on. And the only motive for which I can conceive that Mr. Chamberlain is now advocating the reduction by twenty-three of the members of Ireland, and add them to England is this: that as the population of England is always growing, and the population of Ireland declining, he hopes by a continued series of measures like this to get the representation of Ireland reduced altogether. Now, gentlemen, there is, I think, nothing so wearisome in a speech as to have to quote profusely from others' speeches. I am glad to say my task of quotation is done, but if any of you should want further evidence of what I have been advancing as to the past professions

and the present practices of the president of the Birmingham Liberal Unionist Association, I am prepared, to any gentleman who wishes it, to give readings, periodical readings, from that rare and invaluable book to which I have alluded. Well, it is a necessary and distasteful business; it is a disagreeable business also to appear to deliver a speech directed more or less against one man, but the fact is, it is this one man, distinguished by his power and ability, that you have to fight in the Midlands, and it is for that reason that it seems to me absolutely necessary and essential to show the difference between the Birmingham Liberal Association and the Birmingham Liberal Unionist Association. If we are to believe the president of the latter, true Liberalism consists simply in burking every Liberal measure to which you have ever set the seal of your approval and your enthusiasm, simply in order to maintain a system of government in Ireland like to that which "Austria set up in Venice" and "Russia in Poland." All I can say is this, gentlemen, that if you vote for this spurious Liberalism, you must vote for it with your eyes open. You must use no subterfuge for yourselves. You must not believe the Liberalism that was preached in 1884 is the Liberalism practised in 1894; and if you vote for that Liberal Unionism as now constituted in the Midland counties of this

country, you are voting for nothing Liberal, you are voting for a very doubtful maintenance of the Union. What you are voting for, as a matter of absolute certainty, is the maintenance and establishment of a Tory Government.

I do not say that there are not plenty of programmes still before the Birmingham Liberal Unionist Association. There is always a fertility of programmes in that quarter. We still, I believe, take pride in that Association of the unauthorised programme. Well, the worst of those programmes is, that they are all unauthorised, all immature and all abortive. They are, if I may humbly say so, the green fruit of politics; they are unwholesome if consumed, and they never come to maturity. But there is something to me very pathetic and very interesting in that distinguished man, never wearying in well doing, still pouring forth his neglected programmes to an unobservant world, and thinking that at some time or another he may yet attract to his side those great democratic forces which he has alienated for ever. I do not know if you have ever seen a patient fisherman whipping a stream. He flogs the stream with energy and with conviction. He changes his fly from time to time —now a grey one, and now a gaudy one. But he has a fertile fly-book, and as long as daylight lasts he will fish. Well, gentlemen, I do not object to

our angler going on; it is a spectacle which fills the spectator with admiration for his perseverance; and I believe it would be more successful than it is if it did not happen that we still point to and still cherish some of the fly-books—some of the fly-blown fly-books—of the long past.

Well, gentlemen, there is one programme on which it is understood that great Association is now going to take its stand, and that is the question of Old-Age Pensions. It strikes me that if the old-age pensions wait for Mr. Chamberlain to be in power to bring them into effect, they will be very old-age pensions indeed. Now, gentlemen, this old-age pensions question gives a very good illustration of what the policy of that distinguished man is. I do not doubt for a moment his sincere wish to do good, but I doubt still less his sincerer anxiety to do harm to the present Government. The other day a gentleman brought forward the question of old-age pensions in the House of Commons, and the Minister in charge of that subject, Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, pointed out that as a Royal Commission on that subject had been taking evidence at great length, and was about to report, it was well to wait for that report before going on with the discussion, and he promised that an early day should be given for discussing the Bill which was then before the House. Mr. Chamberlain got up and said that,

though he was a member of the Royal Commission, he could not wait a moment; that the promise of the Minister in charge was totally insufficient for his purpose; that he must have a day to discuss, not the Bill actually before the House, but the whole subject, the report of the Commission, and any other project that might be laid before the House on that subject. Well, the Chancellor of the Exchequer got up, and made that promise, but the occasion was too brilliant to be lost. In spite of his demand being complied with, in spite of the evident recklessness of the demand that they should discuss off-hand the scheme which the Royal Commission was about immediately to report upon, and which involved an expenditure of from five to twenty millions sterling a year, Mr. Chamberlain went into the lobby and voted against the Government.

Now, gentlemen, there is another subject, a subject to which my attention has been called in the audience, on which the Birmingham Liberal Association is singularly dumb. I mean that of the control of the liquor traffic. Now, gentlemen, I am not a fanatic in temperance reform; I am, I hope, a sensible and level-minded politician on all other subjects; but I cannot but be struck by the pathetic urgency with which the appeals for dealing with this question come from every part of

England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. And though I say I am not a fanatic on this question, I view the uncontrolled condition of our liquor traffic as a serious danger, for two reasons. In the first place, no one can deny that there is a great deal too much drinking in this country, and that much of the crime and much of the pauperism, and almost all the degradation, prevalent in this country is attributable to the cause of drink. That does not mean, of course, that there should be no use, but it does mean that there should be a check placed on abuse. But the second point on which I regard it as a danger is this, that it is becoming too great a power in the State. I go so far as to say this, that if the State does not soon control the liquor traffic, the liquor traffic will control the State. Well, that traffic, that trade, has exercised a very energetic influence in all elections where it can do so in opposition to her Majesty's present Government, and I will read you a passage on this subject from the same author which I have been quoting, who used much stronger language than I have been venturing to use, or should dare to use on this subject, but which perhaps explains the ominous silence of the Birmingham Liberal Unionist Association on this subject. What does he say? This is from *The Radical Programme.* I do not know that *The Radical Programme* is a scarce

book, but I do not think it is distributed as freely as it used to be. "The Church is an organisation of privilege, and the alliance between parson and publican, Bible and beer, which is always talked about at the period of a general election, is something more than a jest, and is not merely the alliterative invention of the malignant Radical. The two orders of men, parsons and publicans, stand upon the same political level; they only quarrel when one complains that he is deprived of his due share of patrons and customers by the other. Clergy and licensed victuallers have alike a large vested interest to defend." I confess I think that a trifle coarse; it is not to my taste at all. I am not one of those who believe in the general alliance of the Church and the liquor trade; but I suppose that this great apostle of the Midlands did not speak without some knowledge of what he was talking about, and if I may judge from the reports that have reached me of recent elections, within a not inconsiderable radius of your town of Birmingham, I am inclined to think that the influence of liquor, to which he alludes in such scathing terms, has been by no means over-rated.

Well, gentlemen, we have not brought forward our Bill this session as yet, and you may ask why. The answer is two-fold. In the first place, we have introduced a great number of bills—more, I

fear, than it will be possible to carry into effect. But a little speech of a very respectable Conservative member last night gives you another very good reason why we have not been able to progress with it. It was on a Scotch Bill, and, of course, nobody here understands Scotch Bills or cares about Scotch Bills; but they have a tender place in my heart. But this excellent member, Sir Herbert Maxwell, who is really one of the best Scotch Tory members, got up, and said, at the end of the discussion on the Scotch Local Government Bill, that he was very glad that it was going to be referred to the Scotch Grand Committee; the Scotch Grand Committee was, he thought, an excellent way of dealing with such a Bill; and he praised up the Scotch Grand Committee with all the ardour of enthusiasm. But he forgot to admit that he and the party to which he belonged had for five nights prevented that innocuous proposition being brought to a division; and for five nights had delayed, on a quibble, the progress of all legislation which interested Ireland, Britain, and Wales. Well, gentlemen, that, after all, is our great difficulty. If it were stated by our hostile critics they might say that our policy was too large and our majority was too small, and I don't say that that is at all an unfair criticism. But it certainly is not one that appeals to them, because

they have neither a policy nor a majority. But how did that difficulty arise? How did the difficulty arise of our policy being so extensive in proportion to our means of carrying it? Well, "a Birmingham audience likes frankness," and I will tell you my view of how that occurred. We took over from the old firm when we started in business, we took over all its assets and all its liabilities, and, as I hope and believe, all its goodwill. But, gentlemen, you may well ask how it is when we were also members of the old firm we consented so largely to extend our liabilities. Well, the reason for that is simple enough, at least the reason which appealed to me. I don't know whether it appealed to my friend and colleague on my left. The reason was this: We came with an insufficient majority into power, and we were pledged by every condition of honour and policy to introduce a bill for Home Rule in Ireland. That Bill offered constant chances of defeat. It was a large and complicated measure. There might be points on which the Irish would feel bound to vote against us, and if that had been the case, where would the Government have been? Well, the Government had two choices before it. Either it might have said to Parliament, "We lay before you our programme of what is practicable in this session, besides the Bill for Home Rule;"

but that would have been but a small programme. Or else it might have done what we did, in view of possible disaster, lay before Parliament the main programme of all that we were pledged by honour to do for the country, so that at anyrate we might give a pledge that we were prepared, if strength were given us, to carry that into effect. Well, gentlemen, I admit that the policy is large; and our difficulty is this, that there is a constant pressure upon us to add to that policy, and there is never any pressure whatever, so far as I know, to omit any item of that policy. It is all addition and no omission, and therefore, if you wish to give us strength to carry that policy to an end, why you must show that the country is behind us.

We have of late had two little schisms, not, I think, of an alarming character, but with our majority no schism is to be altogether overlooked. One is an alcoholic schism, and the other is an ecclesiastical schism. You know that the alcoholic schism is this, that a few Irish members have thought it their duty to vote against the Government on the ground that a temporary tax was placed on Irish whisky. Well, I do not judge their motives, and if they think they were furthering the cause of Irish Home Rule by attempting to turn out the present administration and put a Tory Government in their place, it will not show that

they were mistaken, but it will demonstrate, I think, to conviction, that the age of Irish bulls is not entirely past. Well, the other schism is an ecclesiastical schism. Some young and daring natives of the Principality of Wales have taken it into their heads that it would be a wise thing to put this Government into a minority—at least that is the practical effect of their proposition—in order to carry out the disestablishment of the English Church in Wales. Well, I do not say "Shame." It is merely a matter of strategy, a matter of policy in order to carry out what is the object of their earnest convictions. But all I can say is this, that if it is true that they do not trust our promises in the matter, if they do not believe that—as I confidently assert on this occasion, and will again, I hope—before we meet the country, that we shall meet it with a measure of Welsh disestablishment passed through the House of Commons—I cannot control its fate after it leaves the House of Commons,—I say, if they do not believe that pledge, if they do not believe in our honour and our honesty, the sooner they carry their threats into effect the better I shall be pleased. What I say to them I say to all in the Liberal party. If there are any in our ranks who don't care for our policy, who don't care for our personality, who don't trust our zeal and our capacity, by all

means let them turn us out. I for one will never be a Minister on sufferance. But if, on the other hand, you believe in us, if you believe we are honest men, earnest men, industrious men, not incapable men, if you have confidence in our administration at home and abroad, if you believe that we are determined to carry to an issue as far as in us lies the pledges that we have given to our party and our country, I trust that you will also show that confidence in act; that you will work for us in the country as we work for you in Parliament; and that this meeting will be the beginning of a continued and successful effort to remove from this, which is unhappily now the Black Country of Liberalism, something of the too just reproach which now attaches to it.

A REPLY TO CRITICISM

At Birmingham, 24th May 1894.

I CONFESS I was rather dismayed when I found out that I was expected to come to breakfast this morning, and to make another speech. I was under the impression that there was a holy but unwritten tradition on public speaking, that, like other amusements, it should not be legitimately indulged in before the eleventh hour of the day. I was, therefore, in a position of some bewilderment as to how I should comport myself under these conditions, so novel to me, and what I should find to say of interest to you in Birmingham, after having detained you at so great a length last night. But an unexpected friend came to my aid, and in the columns of the *Birmingham Daily Post* of this morning I found a welcome source. I think, after all, that the institution of a breakfast speech after an evening meeting is not altogether a bad one, because it enables you to nail certain statements to the counter, and to make a a provision against too large a dissemination of

what are incorrect apprehensions. Gentlemen, it afforded me the most unbounded pleasure to discover in the columns of the *Daily Post* the first revelation of the mystery for which I groped in vain last night. I have always been extremely anxious to know how it was possible to reconcile the words which I cited on some of the great questions of the day with the present action of the speaker on those questions, and the answer comes to me after long waiting, as all comes to him who waits. I am told that I seemed to forget, when I read quotation after quotation from Mr. Chamberlain's speeches of 1884 and 1885, that in those days the measures thus advocated were not advocated merely as a means for converting the British elector to a faith in Irish Home Rule. Well, I was not aware that they were so advocated. Now, I have never understood that it was the practice of a British Government to fix its eyes entirely on one portion, however important it may be, of the United Kingdom. If that is the idea of any Government whatever, the Government will not last long, because it will be repudiated by all the other members of that union of which we form a part. Why, gentlemen, it is as obvious to you as it is to the *Birmingham Daily Post*, that the Government that wishes to maintain its majority, and, what is much more than maintain its majority,

maintain its character, is bound to bring forward those measures to which it pledged itself at the general election as being in its opinion the measures best calculated to promote prosperity in these islands. But let us take this a little farther, because it is a most remarkable utterance. Mr. Chamberlain, it appears, is unable now to support any measure that he supported in 1884 and 1885, because he believes that under their cloak and under their shadow may be introduced the baneful measure of Home Rule. But surely that is skating on rather thin ice, because I remember the time that Mr. Chamberlain was a Home Ruler. We have it on his assurance that he was a Home Ruler before Mr. Gladstone. We have it further on his own assurance that he was willing to give Ireland what some actual Home Ruler would not be willing to give her, all the paraphernalia of Cabinet administration, and that even since the schism. And so we narrow the point down to this, that this great and ardent reformer, who has —and I must give him credit for that—proclaimed the necessity of these reforms in language so ardent, so powerful, and so incisive that it cannot be forgotten, has been obliged to throw all this on to the waste-paper heap, not, it is obvious, on the mere question of Home Rule in any shape, but on the question of the social degree and position that

that Home Rule is to assume. We hear much of the tepidness of old Whiggery, but what is that compared to the lukewarmness of an ardent reformer, who is obliged to sink every reform on which he has set his heart, every reform that would benefit England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, because he has not been able to come to an agreement—perhaps has not tried to come to an agreement—as regards the precise form in which Home Rule is to be granted to Ireland? What is more remarkable is this. You may remember a piece of furniture in which I am not particularly interested—perhaps of which we have heard too much—which was called the Round Table; but this great reformer, who has had to give up all reforms because of his adherence to Home Rule, was then willing, after the schism of 1886, to meet those pestilential politicians in Cabinet conference in order to arrange the exact process on which Home Rule was to be given, and, if we may believe the record, had very nearly agreed on the terms. Well, I say, then, this is uncommonly difficult ground on which to abandon the creed and faith of your youth.

But I have not done with this extraordinary reason yet. I beg your pardon for detaining you on this question; but you can understand the natural bewilderment into which I have been

thrown quite suddenly by this startling revelation. Well, who is the head, who is the official head of this Government which has alienated Mr. Chamberlain by bringing forward measures on which he has set his heart merely as a cloak and a means for obtaining Home Rule? Why, the gentleman of whom he asks, as "Birmingham likes frankness," whether he is a Home Ruler at all. And therefore it comes to this—mark the gradations of political sentiment—it simply comes to this, that he has been obliged to abandon his whole political stock-in-trade by which he obtained the faith of Birmingham and the country, because he cannot agree,—and has, perhaps, as I said before, never tried to agree,—on the precise form in which Home Rule is to be given, and which he says is now being put forward by a Minister whom he believes is not a Home Ruler at all. Well, Birmingham likes frankness, and I do not doubt that at a very early opportunity you will have all this fully explained to you. But I don't confine myself in the *Birmingham Daily Post* to the leading article. I turn to the more varied and individualistic columns of the correspondence, and I find a letter which attracted me, as it was headed by my name, in which it is said that the writer, who signs himself "F.," went with a few friends — I suppose they were the

minority of three who held up their hands against the resolution of confidence—to find out whether I would answer Mr. Chamberlain's two questions: Whether I support Home Rule, and whether I support the late Home Rule Bill. Well, they regard my answer as totally inadequate, because I said that those questions were an insult, and therefore it did not seem to me necessary, as a Minister who had been jointly responsible for the production of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill, which I suppose includes the principle of Home Rule, to say more; and therefore, if I answer the second question I may be presumed to have answered the first. I did regard it as an insult to ask a Minister who is jointly responsible for that Bill, who had spoken for the Bill, and voted for the Bill, whether in his heart of hearts he was in favour of that Bill at all. Well, I used to think you were very intelligent people in Birmingham; but, as I see you require every "t" to be crossed and every "i" to be dotted, I will here repeat at this gathering of Liberals, quite formally, for the satisfaction not merely of Mr. Chamberlain, but of "F." and his few friends—that I was in favour of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill. That is why I was a party to its production, that is why I spoke for it, and, more amazing still, that is why I voted for it. I don't say that in my opinion it

was a perfect Bill—I have never seen a great Bill that I thought was a perfect Bill; but the very nature of the subject with which it deals prevents the Home Rule Bill from being an absolutely perfect Bill. But our feeling about the matter is this, that we have to produce a measure to carry out the policy which we believe to be most efficacious to Ireland, and that although on the next occasion we produce an Irish Home Rule Bill we may have learned much from the discussion of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill last year; and though we know that it must inherently possess —any such measure must possess—many imperfections, yet at the same time they will not deter us from making another attempt to settle this question in consonance with Irish ideas and with the preservation of the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament.

But I will now return to the leader writer,—the letter does not furnish me with sufficient pabulum to continue,—and I come to what they say about the House of Lords, and I say that not without noticing particularly what the *Daily Post* says about the House of Lords, but by enlarging what I said last night. The *Daily Post* complains that I have no proposals to offer with regard to the House of Lords, and that I look for guidance and inspiration to the Leeds Conference. I have

already said at Edinburgh that the Government, in a great measure of this kind, which touches the Constitution nearly, is bound to look for the impulse and the direction from the country itself. When it has received that impulse and that direction it will be prepared to lay on the table of Parliament a measure dealing with that question. But I cannot conceive anything more preposterous, more unconstitutional—and I presume the *Daily Post* is now a constitutional organ, in its very strictest sense—than for a Minister to come down to a public meeting and to announce the precise measure that he thinks ought to be taken with regard to the House of Lords, entering into the details demanded by the *Daily Post*, without having either received a mandate from the country, or without having laid that measure before the High Court of Parliament. I thought I did detect last night in that great and splendid assembly a note of depression that I did not speak of ending the House of Lords. We know the choice between mending and ending. I have always been rather a mender than an ender, if only for one very simple reason, that I have never yet met with a reasonable human being who could tell me the machinery, the constitutional machinery, by which you can put an end to the House of Lords. Supposing that to be desirable, how is it

to be done? It can only be done by a Bill passing both Houses of Parliament putting an end to one branch of the Legislature. I have no idea how you would get that branch of the Legislature to enact its sentence of death. It is said that by a large creation of peers, some 500 or 600, you can obtain the desired result; but it is very doubtful if the Crown could be called upon, or requested to create, the enormous army of peers for the purpose of putting an end to one branch of the Legislature. At any rate, it would be a great strain on the Constitution. But there is this further objection. When you get your peers inside the House of Lords, are you quite certain how they will vote? We have a somewhat bitter experience on that point. I believe it was said that the peers created by Mr. Gladstone himself who voted against the Home Rule Bill last year, would have been sufficient in themselves to secure its rejection. Well, those peers were presumably put in by Mr. Gladstone under the idea that they would support his policy, and I only indicate that to you as being a source of danger in the masterstroke of policy which is suggested in this way. I saw the other day that in one of the colonies the thing was actually tried. It was in Nova Scotia or New Brunswick that a certain number of peers or members of the Legislative Council were made

either in order to control the Legislative Council or to put an end to it, which it was I forget, but that does not bear on my argument. When these gentlemen had once taken their seats they what is called reconsidered their position. Well, gentlemen, I say, therefore, that you must not regard the problem of ending the House of Lords as one of so simple a character as you have sometimes heard; and even the problem of mending the House of Lords, by which I mean that you should deprive it of its power in a large extent, if not altogether, to thwart the will of the House of Commons — even that you will find not unattended by some practical difficulties; and it is for that reason that I, as a member of the Government, ask the support of the nation, ask the direction of the nation, ask above all for the enthusiasm of the nation, in order to help us to arrive at a solution of the question.

And now I will take the last point which I think it necessary to deal with in this unfortunate article. It attempts to make a little mischief for me with regard to a passage of my speech which it says might make some mischief with foreign Powers. You will remember that I said something about the government of Austria in Venice and of Russia in Poland, with the object of showing that the aim of Liberal Unionism in Birmingham

appeared to be to keep back all measures of reform that were before the country, in order to maintain a system of government analogous to that which it was said had prevailed in Venice under Austria and in Poland under Russia. Unhappy *Daily Post*! Why, that was a quotation from Mr. Chamberlain. They were not words of mine, for this simple reason, that, having been some time in the Foreign Office, I should never have thought of using them. It is not my part, as having been Foreign Minister, to use language with regard to foreign Powers which I think is offensive in its character, so I quoted to show the extraordinary nature of the Unionist position on this question the very words of the high prophet himself. Now, gentlemen, there is one word more I would say before I leave you with regard to this Irish question. I am bound to say that, in spite of our limited majority, there are points which I consider full of hope for its settlement. One is the closer union between the Irish party and the Liberal party. I have never had an opportunity of saying yet what I feel from the bottom of my heart of the way in which the Irish party came to the assistance of the Government the other day on a critical division. In spite of its being in the face of an interest exceedingly powerful in Ireland, and in spite of their honest and honourable

poverty, they made exertions which were not made, I think, in every section of the party, which have not always been made at anyrate in every section of the party, but they came forward like men, and in a way which I venture to think will not readily be forgotten by the Liberal party in the country. Another point to which I would call your attention is the great tranquillity of Ireland. I know that Mr. Balfour has said if Ireland was perfectly peaceful and tranquil he would still oppose her wishes as regards Home Rule. Well, that may be the utterance of a statesman or it may not. I think it extremely probable that if Ireland were entirely tranquil, Mr. Balfour would be disposed to leave it severely alone; but my belief is that, in persuading the masses of the English people of the wisdom, the justice, and the expediency of Home Rule, there is no more important factor in the argument than the peaceable nature of Irish relations at this moment, and the absolute want of sympathy with crime. Our rival Association, on which we discoursed so much last night, is certainly not Liberal. Is it Unionist? It claims, I suppose, by that title full attachment to the principles which bind Ireland to Great Britain; but I would ask them, and all those who have studied the history of the Treaty of Union, who have studied the life and

character of that immortal man, Pitt, to whose coat-tails they now vainly cling, whether the Treaty of Union was a counsel of perfection, or rather a counsel of despair. It was not a counsel of perfection at the time of its origin: it was not a counsel of perfection in the method by which it was brought to pass. It was a counsel of despair then, and day by day and hour by hour that has passed over Ireland since that treaty was passed it has become more and more a counsel of despair. Well, I cannot give that Association the title of Liberal—I cannot give it the title of Unionist; but I do believe, whatever its efforts or its strategy may be in the Midlands, that, owing partly to your new Federation and partly to the growth of an irresistible public opinion on that great question which Mr. Gladstone made his own, and which he has left as his legacy to us, that you will see a marked change in—I am not ashamed to repeat it—the opinions of the predominant partner; and I shall be truly glad and truly proud if in the very smallest measure my visit to Birmingham has contributed to that end.

FOREIGN POLICY AND THE LITTLE ENGLANDERS

Speech at the Cutlers' Feast, Sheffield, 25th October 1894

MR. MASTER CUTLER, Ladies and Gentlemen,—I have the greatest pleasure in visiting in my official capacity this ancient and illustrious feast. It gives me additional gratification to find that you received the toast of her Majesty's Ministers with so much kindness and even with so much enthusiasm. Do not think that I am altogether misled by those cheers. I observed a decorous enthusiasm when my colleague Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth spoke of the utility of Sheffield to the Government in the matter of armour plates; but I am not so vain as to suppose — more especially when I look at some of the familiar countenances around me—that the toast of her Majesty's Ministers is drunk in this great city without considerable reservation. I hear a faint protest. I belive that in Sheffield you will always drink with real sympathy the health of the men

who are endeavouring to carry on under unusual difficulties what must always be an enormously critical task. I think I may put it delicately, and conciliate your sense of truth as well, when I say you sympathise with her Majesty's Government more in foreign than in domestic politics. Under these circumstances it is not easy for me to open my heart to you. But I shall have so considerable an opportunity of doing that within forty-eight hours, that I do not altogether regret that circumstance. But, of course, a certain deprivation, a certain limitation in the area of speech is not very convenient for a person replying for her Majesty's Ministers. I have thought of two or three topics. I have thought of congratulating you, sir, on the progress of Sheffield from the time when, according to Lord Macaulay's description, 2000 wretched beings, who lived in a state of misery on a marsh in the reign of James I., represented what is now a city of 350,000 inhabitants. It was suggested to me also by a paragraph that was sent me in the papers on my arrival—at least, I imagine it was suggested to me by the marks upon it—that I should refer to the circumstance that at the Cutlers' Feast exactly one hundred years ago, in 1794, Lord Fitzwilliam was the guest who went immediately afterwards with a message of conciliation to Ireland. But Ireland is a thorny topic,

and I am not altogether orthodox on that subject of Lord Fitzwilliam's mission of peace. Now, when I came into this hall I saw opposite me Mr. Ellis, who sat with me last November on the joint committee of the coal strike, and it struck me that if I had had a little more opportunity for preparation I might have preached on that text a wholesome sermon on conciliation in trade disputes. But, after all, gentlemen, I have come to the conclusion that, as I said before, you are always with the British Government, whatever it may be, on foreign politics, and that therefore it may be best that I should clear up some small misunderstandings that exist concerning that province of our policy.

In that domain there is one shadow at this moment which clouds everything else. There is not a thoughtful mind in Europe at this moment which is not turned to the sick-bed at Livadia. There have been in times past subjects of difference with Russia, acute subjects of difference; but I am certain that there is no one who knows what has passed in Europe for the past twelve years who does not feel the immeasurable debt of obligation under which we lie to the Emperor of Russia. Gentlemen, it is not my concern to-night to say one word as to the relation of the Emperor to his own Empire, though it seems clear enough,

from the pictures that are delineated to us by newspaper correspondents, that in every church in Russia there are anxious prayers offered at this moment for his recovery. But we have a right to concern ourselves with the Emperor as he appears to foreign countries, and we have in him a monarch whose watchword and whose reign and whose character have been the worship of truth and the worship of peace. I do not say that he will rank, or does rank, among the Cæsars or the Napoleons of history, the great conquerors of whom history perhaps takes too much account. But if "peace has her victories not less renowned than war," the Emperor of Russia will reign in history with a title not less disputed to fame than either Cæsar or Napoleon. It is something in a sovereign of unbounded power to have reproduced—not reproduced altogether, but to have made more respected—in the realms of diplomacy a resolute conscientious devotion to truth. I have not the honour of that sovereign's acquaintance, but all who have unite to say that the one sin he never forgives is the sin of personal deceit and untruthfulness. On the other hand, he has by his influence done that which few men in his position have ever been able to do, to guarantee in his own person, by his own character, that matter of inestimable importance, the peace of Europe. It

is more than four-and-twenty years ago since we had a great European war, and it is not too much to say that, if peace has not been broken in more than one instance during late years, it is due as much to the character and the influence of the Emperor of Russia as to any other cause we may mention. I can say nothing as to the issue of his illness. That we do not know; but we in Great Britain, whose interest is in peace, have the deepest interest in his welfare and in his future, because we know that if he is removed, one of the greatest, perhaps the greatest, guarantee for the peace of the world is removed with his life.

And now we may pass from that subject, which is full of gloomy anxiety, to one which is of more congratulation. To all of us it must be a subject of the intensest satisfaction, that what is called "the silly season" is over. How silly that season can be, how profoundly idiotic, no one who is not behind the scenes can adequately tell. Of course, we know that in the realm of nature the marine reptile, and the abnormal fruit, are distinct symptoms of that period of the year. But in the domain of politics we recognise also, without the slightest possibility of mistake, the "Cabinet Crisis" and the "Strained Relations with Foreign Powers." The other day there was a Cabinet called which seems to have been one of the most

remarkable Cabinets that have ever been held, for a thousand reasons were found for its being assembled, and not one of those was a right one. At first we were all in a turmoil and a terror because it meant war, and then, immediately it was over, we discovered that it meant something totally different, and so we went to bed in peace. Of course it was perfectly true that the year before last, if not last year—but certainly the year before last—Cabinets were summoned at almost exactly the same date under somewhat more abnormal circumstances. But then they said, "This Cabinet is totally different; this Cabinet is 'Madagascar'"; and we were so frightened by the word "Madagascar" that we hardly knew where we were for the moment. As far as I can make out, it is not the Cabinet which is at fault in these rumours; it is the commentators of the Cabinet. A Cabinet Minister is bound by the strictest oath not to reveal what passes in the Cabinet, except with the sanction of his Sovereign, and as that sanction is only given under exceptional circumstances you may guess how seldom the purposes and proceedings of Cabinets leak out. But in the silly season there is a reason for different operations. It seems to me that the process is mainly this, that you first invent an alarming reason for the meeting of the Cabinet in order that you may

be alarmed; and that then, when that emotion has lasted long enough, you invent a reassuring reason in order that you may be reassured. Then, some time after the Cabinet met, we heard at last the real reason. The Cabinet had met in order to discuss the purpose of intervention between China and Japan. It had issued a circular, and it had met with a unanimous rebuff. This, I fear, was not much more accurate than the others. The matter of the intervention between China and Japan was not discussed at the Cabinet. No circular was issued, and no rebuff was received. Let me say exactly on what this report, so far as I can learn, arose. It is a matter of some delicacy; because, if I speak too definitely, I may tend to prevent the very object we had in view. But it is well that the country should know what the general policy of the Cabinet has been, even if we cannot give our exact justification for it. You all know what the war is between China and Japan. Some may take it to be merely an interesting conflict between the oldest forms of civilisation and the newest forms of civilisation; but to us, with our Eastern interests, it means a great deal more than that. I, at anyrate, cannot contemplate any such event as might happen in the sudden destruction of the central Government of China by a conquering force. A headless China, a China

without a Government of any kind, means such a scene of chaos and horror as the world perhaps has never contemplated. A population, ingenuous indeed, but barbarous and cruel when its passions are aroused, whose numbers are counted, not by millions, but by hundreds of millions, suddenly let loose without the control—none too strong as it is—of a dynasty or Government at Pekin, means, apart from measures that the Powers may take to protect themselves, such an appalling danger to every Christian situated within its limits, such an overflow of dangerous elements into every part of the world that joins it, that I, for one, consider it might be the gravest catastrophe that could happen to Asiatic civilisation. Well, not long ago there reached us, after the first Japanese victory, information from a source which, for reasons you will understand, I cannot describe exactly, but which I may characterise as, in my opinion, the highest, the most authoritative, and the most convincing that we could have on that subject,—the news that China was willing to concede honourable terms of peace, such as would considerably exceed the demands of Japan in entering on the war, and which Japan would certainly accept without diminution of prestige or advantage. It seemed to us then that it was impossible absolutely to put this information in our pockets and keep it

to ourselves, because I think you will agree with me, to whatever party at home you may belong, that no Ministry could have incurred such a responsibility. Representing as they do a nation whose interest is peace, a nation so largely engaged in the East, and, let me add, without cant, a Christian nation, they could not disregard such overtures. We did not found great hopes upon that, but we did think it our duty to sound the other Courts of Europe and of the United States to ascertain if, in their opinion, there was any possibility of Japan and China coming to terms upon any such conditions as those I have indicated. The reception of these approaches was extraordinarily favourable. The Powers of Europe seemed to feel that a common calamity overshadowed them; but in the judgment of one or two of them—only one, I think, but we will say one or two to be within the confines of the truth—it did not appear that the time had yet arrived when conditions could be put forward with any advantage for the consideration of the combatants. I do not say that I disagree with that view. I am inclined rather to concur with it; but to represent that when the Powers of Europe consider a question of this kind, if one of the Powers thinks the time has not yet come and the other Powers are prepared to strain a point and think that the

time has come, that there is, therefore, a rebuff for the Power that has sounded them in the interests of peace, is to my mind one of the most preposterous propositions, and one of the propositions most hostile and damaging to the peaceful relations of the world, that can possibly be conceived. Master Cutler, you may ask me, and ask me fairly, why, if we had these conditions in our pocket, we did not take them ourselves to Japan? "Why," you may say, "consult other Powers at all? Proceed on your own peaceful mission alone and unaided." Well, I think the answer to that is tolerably clear. In the first place, in a great catastrophe of this kind the more Great Powers you have engaged in peace-making the better for peace. The next reason is this, that in all great international concerns, a concert of Powers, when it can be obtained, is increasingly valuable. In my belief, the object of every Foreign Minister of the country should be to aim, whenever he can, to secure a concert of thePowers; and therefore, in any case of this kind, a Foreign Minister, to my mind, would have been grossly blameable if he had not sought in some respect to obtain a concert of the Powers. Another reason is this, that between combatants it is a point of pride not to be the first to ask for peace, and it is a valuable matter both in public and private life to have a mediator from

whom peace may be accepted honourably, instead of accepting it from the enemy; and in an international consideration of this kind the more mediators there are, the more likely you are to secure the object in view. The other reason—the last reason—is this, and it is one which I am sure will come with a sort of shock to the innocent inhabitants of Sheffield. Gentlemen, it may be news to you that the Great Powers of Europe, the Great Powers of the world, are profoundly suspicious of each other and of innocent Great Britain; and there is no Power so little suspicious of others or so profoundly suspected by others as that Empire to which you and I have the honour to belong. You cannot open a paper abroad which does not point to every convulsion in politics, and possibly to some convulsions of nature, as due to British influence. But certain I am of this, that in the jealous condition of things produced by the war between China and Japan it would have been madness for this country to have gone alone and attempted to act as bottle-holder between China and Japan, without incurring the suspicion of every Power interested—and all Powers are interested—in the East. Now, I think we have had enough of this particular instance. I think you will agree with me, after the statement I have been able to make, guarded as it must be in

many particulars, that her Majesty's Ministers did not subject the dignity of Great Britain to any rebuff at the hands of other Powers, and that the Government only did its duty in attempting to discover a means of putting an end to this disastrous war.

But, gentlemen, there is one word more. In my explanation I said that you innocent inhabitants of Sheffield would be shocked at the idea that you should be suspected, but I suppose there is no one here who travels, who is not impressed when he goes abroad, more than by anything else, more even than by the Pyramids or St. Peter's, with the prevailing dislike and suspicion which the continental press express to this country. I do not know that I can give you an adequate reason, but the one most satisfactory to my mind is this. I would, before I give it, separate the Governments from the press of Europe, because our relations with all Governments are of the most friendly character. I believe that it lies more in the fact of your Colonial Empire and of the new colonial aspirations of other Empires than to any other cause. Of late years continental countries have sought their satisfaction either for disappointment in Europe or for commerce falling off in the founding of new Empires beyond the seas. They find our colonies prosperous, contented, growing ; and they are surprised that in the few years in which

they have attempted the same thing their colonies are not equally prosperous and growing. I think a little reflection would show them that we who have gained our experience by centuries of work, who have bought our colonies by a vast expenditure of blood and money, have almost a claim to have colonies in a better and more efficient condition than those which were begun only yesterday and the day before.

There is another subject connected with this upon which I must say one word before I sit down. I said that the last Cabinet Council was put down to Madagascar. The sacred word "Madagascar" reminded me rather of that famous election address of Lord Beaconsfield's, in which he said that the faults of Mr. Gladstone's then Government were all to be summed up in their policy in the Straits of Malacca. The question of Madagascar was so far removed from the purview of the last Cabinet Council that I greatly doubt if the word "Madagascar" has been mentioned between the Governments of Great Britain and France for the last two years, and I cannot speak much beyond that. I think that authoritative statement will do much to dispel the idea of friction between France and Great Britain on the subject of Madagascar. The subject of Madagascar lies in a nutshell. By a treaty, concluded under a

previous Government, Madagascar is recognised to be under the protectorate of France. As long as France does not exceed her rights under that treaty, and I have no reason to suppose that she will, England, with all her interest in Madagascar, with all her missionary and traditionary interests in Madagascar, can only abide by the treaty she has signed. The Colonial Empire to which I have alluded, all the various points at which France and England touch each other, no doubt give cause for some friction and some embarrassment. I should not be sincere if I said that there had not been periods within the last two years when I had felt some anxiety about our relations with France. But I am bound to say also that those relations, by conciliation on both sides, may be eventually improved, and that we in this country, on our side, are at this moment negotiating in Paris for a settlement of the various questions pending. I hope that these questions may be settled, but in so vast a variety of them, in cases where we touch each other at every point, you must be patient and not expect a settlement too soon; because a settlement that is not comprehensive is worse than no settlement at all, and a settlement in which the Government do not maintain the vital interests of Great Britain would equally be worse than no settlement at all. I confess that when I review the

history of the last few years, during which I have had more immediate connection with our foreign policy, I cannot consider that in any friction, or delicacy, or matter of delicacy, or situation of delicacy, there has been with France, we can blame ourselves for any act of aggression. I do not think that we have been guilty of offence in any degree, and that Government would live but a short time in England that did not adequately respect the rights of Great Britain. Well, in discussing these vast topics—and I am sorry that I have detained you at so great length—in discussing these vast topics we must remember that it is not the Government alone that sustains the honour of the nation, but the spirit of the nation itself. A weak Government means a weak nation behind it. A Government cannot be strong unless the nation, in questions of foreign policy, is united. I believe that this country is united and determined on questions of foreign policy to a degree which has never been known before.

I believe that party of a small England, of a shrunk England, of a degraded England, of a neutral England, of a submissive England, has died. Do not believe that the party that supports the Empire is limited to those who wear black coats, or to those who will pay the higher duties under Sir William Harcourt's scheme. The

democracy are just as vitally interested as any other portion of the State, if only for the purposes of commerce, in the maintenance of the name and of the honour of Great Britain. As you have admitted larger and larger numbers of your fellow-countrymen to the suffrage, they each of them feel that their personal name and honour are now implicated in the name and honour of the Empire. We have an animating memory in connection with that fact. To-night is St. Crispin's night, the night of the most memorable achievement in the annals of England, told by the greatest of Englishmen. The records of Agincourt have not yet died away. In the memorable speech which Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Henry V., that great King says that as long as that day will be celebrated their fame will be remembered. It is nearly five centuries since that great day, but even after that lapse of time it is not an ill thing for us to remember the stuff from which we are descended, to remember the deeds of which our forefathers were capable, and to determine once for all that we in our generation will not fall short of that memory and that ideal, and that we in our time will maintain untarnished the Empire that they have made and handed down.

REFORM OF THE LORDS

At Bradford, 27th October 1894

GENTLEMEN,—I have, as my friend Mr. Lefevre says, long been absent from a political platform. I have kept silence, yea, even from good words, and I have done so for reasons with which I need not trouble you. It is sometimes well for people who hold the office which I unworthily occupy not to be too much in the foreground, but whatever has been the cause of that silence, I am glad that it should be broken in Bradford. If I might confess to a further feeling, it is one of shame that I have not been in Bradford before. But now, after the missionaries of another creed have so abundantly sown their opinions in the unprepossessing soil of Bradford, as my friend Mr. Lefevre described it, it is time, perhaps, that one of the true faith should come to refresh the fainting spirits of his disciples. And now I have been somewhat perplexed as to what I was to speak to you about to-night. I have so long a silence behind me, and there are so many questions before me, that I do

not doubt that, if physical strength were given to me and to you, I could speak for many hours without exhausting the political situation. The air is full of speculation. It is rife with rumour. We hear one thing one day and one another, all equally inspired. We hear much of an approaching dissolution, and perhaps, after all, it is not possible that the life of the Parliament should be very far extended. I do not set any limits to its existence —that will probably not be done by me; but there is one factor in it which makes it probable that it will not run to anything like its full extent, and that is the veto that is placed by an irresponsible Chamber on all those measures dealing with Ireland which we, at the last election, were mainly, if not specially, instructed to bring forward.

Well, when the dissolution comes, what will it be fought upon? Will it be fought upon Disestablishment, or Home Rule, or the liquor question? I hear all these mentioned as a motive power at the next election; but, in my opinion, and I give it for what it is worth, the next election will be fought on none of these questions, but on one which includes and represents them all—I mean the House of Lords. I propose, then, to speak about the House of Lords to-night, and if I do not do so with all the passion and with all the fervour and with all the power of invective which orators in a

less responsible situation may be able to indulge in, to your unbounded delight and my own, you must put it down not so much to my want of zeal in the cause as to the fact that I should be wanting in my duty as a Minister if I approached the greatest constitutional question that has arisen in England for two centuries or more without a solemn sense of responsibility for my words. Now, this question of the House of Lords is not a new question. It is over a hundred years since Mr. Pitt declared that that was the part of the Constitution which would first give way. It is just under a hundred years since Mr. Burke said of the House of Lords, "It is done with, that part of the Constitution. They have been." But for ninety-nine years since then the House of Lords has continued to exist. And if you will pardon me one word of egotism, I would say that all through my political life it is the question to which I have attached the most importance. On two occasions I have brought it before the notice of the House of Lords themselves, and on neither occasion have I spared or minced my language; and some five years ago, when at a great Liberal conference in Scotland they spread out their plan of operations, and the number of subjects with which they proposed to deal, I had to tell them that their programme was a foolish programme, because it

omitted the one question which must take precedence of the realisation of all their projects, and that was a drastic dealing with the House of Lords. When I have said these things to my English friends, they have said, "Why do you tilt at those windmills? Take up practical subjects. That question will settle itself." But that question will not settle itself. It cannot settle itself; but if you do not take care, it will wreck many Liberal measures and many Liberal Governments before it has done. I will tell you why. When Liberal Governments come back to the country to give an account of their stewardship, they do so with many promises unfulfilled, because of the action of the House of Lords, and the country does not always scrutinise very nicely the reason for that emptiness. They blame the Liberal Government, and the Liberal Government is overthrown.

Is this a moment at which to deal with the House of Lords? I think it is; and I think I can show you and our opponents that no more opportune time could have been found. I know well the advantage that the House of Lords have in representing the English majority against Irish Home Rule. I know that, linked to that majority, they occupy a stronger position in many ways than they have for some years past. I will not upon this occasion exaggerate the importance of

the Leeds Conference, important as it was; but I will say this, that if it is a time of calmness and apathy with regard to the House of Lords, as our opponents say, that is precisely a reason for dealing with it now, because great constitutional questions should not be dealt with at moments of passion and of revolution, but they should be dealt with by the calm and unbiassed reason of the people of the country. What has been the course of history on this question? There have been paroxysms of passion against the House of Lords, followed by intervals of calm, when the nation has been thwarted on some great question in which it took an interest. It has flamed into a fury. The House of Lords has given way. The nation then has relapsed, and by that has given the House of Lords a new lease of life. And those periods of passion and of reaction have been so constant that they have not given us, at any time perhaps, on the showing of our opponents, the requisite calm for dealing with this question. What is more unfortunate about these sudden paroxysms of passion against the House of Lords, which are so easily allayed, is this, that your passions against the House of Lords are selfish passions in England, that you flame into a rage when the House of Lords defeats some Bill that affects England and is dear to England; but you will not flame up

when the House of Lords deals in the same way with Scotland, or with Ireland, or with Wales. In that way I might compare it, to take a metaphor from Roman history, to the powers that the Prætorian Guards exercised. You might say that, by giving way to the English Prætorians, the House of Lords buys the right of dealing as it chooses with the more distant provinces of the Empire; and the misfortune of that is this, that it produces a feeling of neglect and of differential treatment as between England and Scotland and Ireland and Wales, which in itself is a great danger and a dissolvent of your Empire. I contend, then, that this is a favourable moment. It is not a moment of passion; it is not a moment of reaction; and if the Tories say it is a moment of apathy with regard to the House of Lords, we reply that that is a reason for dealing with the House of Lords with exceptional promptitude. If, on the other hand, there is, as we believe, a feeling of subdued but persistent resentment against the House of Lords, it is equally a moment to deal with the question.

But I shall be asked the question that Lord Melbourne asked about every great political question, "Why not leave it alone?" After all, it may be said, we have got on with it for a great many centuries, and we have prospered in spite of it.

There are worse things than it, such as our climate; and, if we can bear with our climate, is it worth while working ourselves up into a rage against the House of Lords? That might be very well if things had remained as they were; but, while the House of Lords has remained as it was, circumstances have changed all round it. If you pull down a street and rebuild it all with the exception of one house, you will probably find in the course of the year that house will be condemned as a dangerous structure. On three separate occasions you have, in the last sixty years, popularised the Lower Chamber—the House of Commons. In 1832 you proposed the first great Reform Bill, and the House of Lords resisted it to the death. If it had resisted it a little more, you would have no question of the House of Lords to deal with now. That changed the balance of the Constitution; because not merely did it make the House of Commons in itself infinitely more powerful and infinitely more representative, but it diminished the influence of the House of Lords, which up to that time, through the medium of the rotten boroughs, exercised a control over the majority of the House of Commons. Therefore the Reform Bill of 1832 was a nail, and a deep nail, struck into, I will not say the coffin, but the future arrangements of the House of Lords. In 1867

you had another great democratic Reform Bill, which, I may note in passing, the House of Lords allowed to become law at once, because it was introduced by a Tory Government; and in 1884 you had another Reform Bill, which completed the measure of 1867 to a certain extent, and which, as it was introduced by a Liberal Government, was fiercely resisted by the House of Lords. This produced another great outburst of popular feeling, which again ended by strengthening enormously the power of the House of Commons in this country. In 1886 another event took place which still further weakened the House of Lords. For one peculiarity of the situation is this, that each of these three strengthenings of the popular element in the House of Commons has been accompanied, strangely enough, by a diminution of the strength of the popular element in the House of Lords. Even up to the time of the last Reform Bill of 1884 there was some sort of balance between the two parties in the House of Lords. I even recollect, I believe, once in my life, being in a majority in the House of Lords, but that cannot have been on any vital question. But in 1886 the House of Lords changed its character for good or for evil. In 1886 the proposal of the Irish Home Rule Bill alienated the great remaining mass of the Whig or Liberal peers, and

from that time to this the House of Lords has represented no balance of parties whatever, but an overwhelming mass of Tories and so-called Unionists, with a handful of Liberals among them. And so we come to the present state of things. What is that state of things? It is, on the one side, a House elected on almost the most popular possible basis, representing with freedom and directness the wishes of an aspiring and educated people; and, on the other side, a House almost entirely composed of hereditary peers, and hereditary peers opposed to popular aspirations, and that House so composed claims the right to control and veto in all respects except finance the proceedings of the House of Commons.

See how it stands according to the figures. The House of Commons consists of 670 members, of whom 350 or thereabouts support the Government—the Government of the day. The House of Lords consists of some 560 members, of whom about 30 support the Government of the day. Nor can there be any possible change in those conditions. No Liberal Government, however Liberal or however little Liberal it may be, can ever hope to possess much more than 5 per cent. of the whole House of Lords in its support, and any Tory Government would be disgraced if it possessed much less than the remaining 95 per cent. And

you must remember this, that this House, which thus contains 5 per cent. of Liberals and 95 per cent of another party, which I will not now define, rules Scotland, which sympathises with the 5 per cent.; Wales, which sympathises with the 5 per cent.; Ireland, which sympathises with the 5 per cent.; and England, which, except on the question of Home Rule, does, I believe, in fact and in practice, in general sympathise with the 5 per cent. also. Now, suppose at the next election you were to send back only 100 Liberals to the House of Commons, there would be 30 Liberal peers. Suppose you were to send 200 back to the House of Commons, there would be 30 Liberal peers. Suppose you were to send 300 back, there would be 30 Liberal peers. Suppose you were to send 400 back, there would be 30 Liberal peers. Suppose you were to send 500 back, there would be 30 Liberal peers. Suppose you were to send 600 Liberal members back, still, there would be only 30 Liberal peers. And if you sent the whole House of Commons back Liberals, there would be only 30 Liberal peers. What a mockery is this? We boast of our free institutions. We swell as we walk abroad and survey less fortunate countries. We make broad the phylacteries of freedom upon our foreheads. We thank God that we are not as other less favoured men are, and all the time we

endure this mockery of freedom. You are bound hand and foot. You may vote, and vote till you are black in the face. It will not change the face of matters at all; still the House of Lords will control at its will the measures of your representatives; still you will have to go hat in hand to the House of Lords to ask it to pass your measures, in however mutilated a shape they may wish. It has practically come to this, that we, knowing the House of Lords is a party body of one complexion, cannot any longer introduce the Bills that we think fit, unless we mean to waste the time of the House of Commons by an absolutely bootless and fruitless process, or else we must simply introduce the Bills into the House of Commons which we think have some possible chance of passing the Tory party in the House of Lords.

Now, I confess quite freely that I am a Second Chamber man in principle. I am all for a Second Chamber. I am not for the uncontrolled government of a single Chamber any more than I am for the uncontrolled government of a single man. The temptation of absolute power is too great for any man or any body of men; and I believe—I am speaking from recollection — that so keen and ardent a Radical as John Stuart Mill held that opinion. I am also strongly of opinion that all experience points to having a Second Chamber of

some sort. That does not imply an admiration for the House of Lords. The American Constitution-makers, who made a Constitution under the inspiration of their fresh breath of freedom and independence, created a much stronger Second Chamber than any of us ever wish to see in this country; and, what is more, I believe that the feeling of the country on the whole coincides with my principle in that respect. There may be differences of opinion on that point, and I am aware that there are; but I am bound to tell you what is my conviction in the matter, and I should not be worthy of your confidence if I did not. But I am bound to say that, if I am asked to choose between no Second Chamber at all and a Second Chamber constituted as the House of Lords is, I will not make my choice before this assembly, but I will say there is ground for hesitation with regard to my principle. The fact is this, that to my mind it is an absolute danger, an invitation to revolution, that there should be an assembly of this kind in this position, and therefore it is as a lover of the Constitution as well as a lover of freedom that I implore you to take this question into your immediate consideration.

If I hesitate between no Second Chamber and the House of Lords, between my dislike for a single Chamber and the feeling as to whether the

House of Lords is a better one than none, it is for this reason, that in my judgment the House of Lords is not a Second Chamber at all. I will not say that it is a Tory caucus, because that might be considered an offensive expression. A caucus, after all, is but a temporary body. But I will say this, that it is a permanent party organisation controlled for party purposes and by party managers. I remember Lord Salisbury's defence of the House of Lords in 1888. It was a very ingenious defence, and tickled my fancy amazingly. He admitted that the House of Lords was not always wise or experienced, but he said there seemed to him to be a considerable advantage in having a House which was not particularly devoted to political affairs, but which brought a fresh and innocent and unbiassed judgment to the consideration of the projects presented to their notice. I confess I think there is something rather attractive in that idea. But you must remember that these innocent political sheep require a shepherd. And Lord Salisbury is that shepherd. And when he commends them for this very process of innocence and readiness to accept conviction, we know whose conviction it is that they are ready to accept. When they are so led and when they are so guided, it very little matters to those who wish for Liberal measures to pass whether they

are as innocent and unbiassed as Lord Salisbury represents, or whether they are a collection of political hacks. Now, I will call another point to your attention in connection with this body, to prove how partisan it is. I will recall to you Lord Salisbury's speeches before the election of 1892, in which, if I am not mistaken, he referred more than once to the almost certainty that the House of Lords would reverse any verdict which might be returned by the people in favour of Home Rule. That could not have been said of any unbiassed or proper Second Chamber. Now, whatever you may say about the course of action of the Upper House on that question, the Tory leader in that statement recognised that he had the House of Lords in his pocket. I will give you further testimony of the same thing. You all know Mr. Chamberlain. There was a time when Mr. Chamberlain was a strong Liberal, and in those days there were no words too corrosive, too bitter, and too contemptuous for him to address to that Second Chamber. But the other day, now that he has become closely allied — to put it no stronger—with another political party, he described the House of Lords as an institution capable of reform, but, being reformed, one upon which he placed considerable value. Of course, the Senate of the United States, which is perhaps

the first Second Chamber in the world, is also guided by political feeling, but it is guided first by one party and then by another. It is constantly refreshed by contact with elections. The difference with the House of Lords is that the House of Lords is stereotyped and fixed, and that, as I have already pointed out to you, no change whatever in the opinion of the country can affect its constitution. Even if there were a change in the House of Lords it is all in one direction. Every now and then a Liberal peer leaves us with a great flourish of trumpets, and the daily papers of the Unionist persuasion and the weekly papers of the same kind devote articles of so much agonising interest to this important defection that you would think another Cardinal Newman was leaving the English Church. The other day one left, and he issued an encyclical, giving *urbi et orbi* his motives for leaving, and his advice to the Government was that, as he could not follow them, they had better retire into obscurity. Why, surely, that is a very strange piece of advice. Because he cannot follow us, he invites us to join him.

I will not go farther now into the different attitudes of the House of Lords; you know them well enough, and I could not go into them at great length to-night; but I say that this is a great national question, that it is a great national danger.

If the other party which professes to have the monopoly of statesmanship had any statesmanship at all, they would have settled it long ago by bringing the House of Lords into some sort of relation with the feelings of the people; but they have preferred to keep it like a sort of Old Guard, to bring up when the necessities of the case require. But the Old Guard is a dangerous weapon, because when you have brought up your last resource, all goes with it. Napoleon had an Old Guard. He brought it up at Waterloo, and when the Old Guard was done with, not merely the battle was done with, but Napoleon and all the concern. We are told that the peers never resist the will of the people. Well, I want to know how the wishes of the people can be better expressed than through the representatives of the people? Who gave the peers the right or the instinct to decide as to what are or what are not the wishes of the people, when those wishes are expressed through their popular representatives? I suppose it implies that the peers give their consent to any reform which is passed, as the Reform Bill of 1832 was passed, under the threat of immediate revolution, when Birmingham was arming, and when Glasgow was arming, and when Bristol was in flames. Are we always to wait for demonstrations of popular feeling of that kind? It is going

a long way to make use of this argument. It is to lay down the preposition that Liberal legislation is always to be carried by menace, and Tory legislation is to descend like a blessed rain from heaven. Ours is only to come by storm, and rain, and snow, and vapour; theirs is to be the fertilising overflow of the Nile. Ours is only to come in a tornado or hurricane, and the result of it will be, if we are never allowed to carry any measure without threats of earthquake or without summoning the spirits of the stormy deep from their lair, to convince the people of this country that our legislation is always turbulence and trouble, and the only possible way of getting laws passed is by confiding them to the Tory Unionist party. I only allude to this to show what a real danger the House of Lords is from a constitutional point of view. It invites unrest, it invites agitation, and in certain causes the cup might boil over, and it might invite revolution. I repeat, then, that this is a great national question, and a great national danger. It is a great question, not merely from its enormous importance, but from the difficulty of dealing with it. Now, the difficulty of dealing with it is this—first, there is a great constitutional issue involved; and secondly, the method of dealing with that constitutional issue is extremely complex and difficult. As to the issue, it is

tremendous. If I knew of any stronger word by which I could describe it, I would use that stronger word. It is the greatest issue that has been put in this country since your fathers resisted the tyranny of Charles I. and of James II. You had a great measure to pass in 1832, but that was a much less measure than this, because then you were only enlarging constituencies that already existed. Now, you have to deal with the question of the revision of the entire Constitution. You have to deal with a council which has survived many centuries and many storms, and which has existed up to now, partly from the disinclination of the English people to constitutional change, and partly also, perhaps, to the personal popularity and ability of some of its members.

This is a great thing to undertake. You will have against you all those causes which see in the House of Lords their strongest bulwark and their last rampart. All those who are opposed to any form of Irish Home Rule will be among the most stalwart defenders of the House of Lords. All those who think churches are benefited by establishment will be found to have their citadel in the House of Lords. Those who are supporters of the liquor interest will be found behind the fortifications of the House of Lords—in fact, some of the princes of that interest will be found seated

on its benches. But I take another question. There is a question which interests every one here, and that is the question of registration. We have great difficulties to contend with in regard to registration, and we have great difficulties here as elsewhere in regard to labour representation. I believe if you could put the expenses of elections on the public funds, and if you could have a second ballot in order to control the application of the expenditure, you would have largely got rid of the jealousy of undue or unworthy representation which is at the bottom of our labour difficulties. What chance have you got of inducing the House of Lords to pass a measure like this? Therefore I may say that those who wish for reform will find in the crusade against the House of Lords their principal enemies arrayed among its defenders. Why do I recapitulate all this? It is to impress upon you that you are entering upon a great campaign, that if you give the seal of your consent to the entrance upon that campaign it will not be an affair of rose water. You must be prepared to take off your waistcoats and not merely your coats. You must be prepared to gird up your loins, and if you once put your hands to this plough you must take a solemn resolution that you will not look back. To some great issues like this, to some great grievances, there is an obvious remedy.

The misfortune of this grievance and of this issue is that the remedy is not obvious.

Within the limits of the Constitution you can only deal with the powers of the House of Lords by a Bill passed through both Houses. Anything but that is, constitutionally speaking, a revolution, as overriding a Chamber of Parliament against its own will, without legislation passed by its own consent. Well, apply that principle—a principle which, unfortunately, no one can controvert—to the remedies that have been offered for the constitution of the House of Lords. In the first place, no such Bill as one for the abolition of the House of Lords or the limitation of the veto of the House of Lords, which are the two remedies which are constantly suggested, would ever pass the House of Lords. Unless you overawe the House of Lords, or make it perfectly clear that the country is determined that this reform shall take effect, no such Bill can ever be made to pass the House of Lords. Of course you may get the House of Lords to surrender, as you get a fortress to surrender, by making it clear that it is encompassed and besieged beyond all hope of deliverance; but that in itself is not an easy task with the garrison that I have described as sure to defend it. We come to the question which seems a much simpler one, that of the abolition of the veto of the House of Lords.

Now the abolition of the veto is greeted with great applause, and I should not be disposed to withhold my applause; but, unfortunately, as a practical plan, the abolition of the veto by a Bill is subject to the same difficulty. You could not get the House of Lords to pass a Bill for the abolition of their veto, because they would say they were not a House of Lords at all without that power. There is this further difficulty. What do you mean by the veto? Do you mean that the House of Lords is to be obliged under certain circumstances to pass the second and third reading of a Bill sent up by the House of Commons? Do you allow it, in fact, any power of revision in Committee? If you allow it any power of dealing with a Bill of the House of Commons in Committee your abolition of the veto would be absolutely fruitless. The House of Lords could pass the second reading of a Bill and knock the bottom out of it in Commitee, and could send it back on the third reading and say, "We have not exercised the veto." Look at the Employers' Liability Bill. The House of Lords passed the Bill; they only introduced one small textual amendment into the Bill. But when it came back from the House of Lords it stank in the nostrils of the House of Commons. I suppose, then, the abolition of the veto means the abolition of the revision in Com-

mittee too, because one without the other would be fruitless and useless. Very well; if you abolish the veto, and abolish the power of dealing with a Bill on second reading, third reading, or Committee, what is the use of the House of Lords at all? You would simply keep it as a High Court of Justice and a sort of state prison for a number of able and eminent men. Well, it is perfectly clear that the House of Lords would infinitely prefer abolition to an abolition of veto such as I have described, because by their abolition they would be able to enter the House of Commons, and many of them would furnish rather formidable candidates. By the abolition of the veto you would simply keep them in a state of suspended animation, if, indeed, you can call it a sort of animation at all; and in order to induce them to put themselves in that unpleasant condition of suspended existence, you would have to use means as violent as you would have in order to procure their abolition.

Well, after the discussion—of course brief and imperfect, but still an adequate discussion—of the methods of pure abolition and abolition of the veto, you can but find yourselves face to face once more with this fact, which is the salient fact of the situation, that you can only deal with the House of Lords by Bill or by revolution. There is no third way at all. That seems to be a discouraging

result to arrive at, but I would not have you lose heart so quickly. It will not come to revolution in the case of the House of Lords. There are means of making the will of the country felt without any violent or unconstitutional methods such as I have described. In this country, whatever the difficulties may be, the good sense of the constituent body is such that we usually arrive at an agreement without those cataclysms which rend other countries. But I do wish you to realise to yourselves precisely the constitutional aspect of the case, and to realise the enormous difficulties of the task.

There is another reason which I will proceed to describe. It would be foolish of me to disguise the fact that some of our candid friends—the more candid the better—have been somewhat disappointed at the tardiness of the Government in taking action against the House of Lords. They have said: "Why, there was a conference at Leeds; it passed resolutions for the abolition of the veto. We sent them to London, and we expected the veto of the House of Lords would be ended in about a fortnight. Bless me, there is something wrong here." We seem to hear from the organs of discontent: "The Government must be lukewarm; there must be something wrong." I know that the Government is responsible for everything.

It is responsible for the cholera, for the crops and for the weather, and anything else which happens to go wrong. Well, I think you will admit that in this particular case it was not one in which we could move, in view of the circumstances of the case, in any violent hurry. I think also that some of these political philosophers seem to think that some of the Government, from being peers, were rather too much attached to the House of which they were members. I am attached to some members in the House of Lords, as I am attached to individuals in the House of Commons; but I confess I should be either below or above human nature if I were attached to the House of Lords as a body. If you think it an agreeable thing for the head of a Government which has a majority in the House of Commons to sit on a bench with half a dozen empty benches behind him and nothing else, you may believe that I am attached to the House of Lords. If you think it an agreeable position to come, with a majority behind your back in the House of Commons, as a suppliant to the House of Lords for every Bill you want passed, then you may think that I am attached to the House of Lords. If you think it agreeable to hear the sounds of conflict in the only place which possesses real political power, and to be shut up in a sort of gilded dungeon with all your bitterest political

enemies — if you think that pleasant, you may believe I am attached to the House of Lords. I confess that I feel no ground in my conscience for any such impeachments, and if you still have any lurking distrust of my wish to deal with the House of Lords in a drastic manner, I would remind you—although I will at once forbid any wrong and indecent inferences from the proverb that I am going to parody—that it may not sometimes be a bad thing to "set a peer to catch a peer." I fully acknowledge the responsibility which lies upon a Government. It was because that responsibility was so grave that we have been silent. I fully acknowledge the importance to be attached to the Leeds Conference. I acknowledge the sincerity and earnestness with which those proceedings were conducted. But one swallow does not make a summer, and one conference in itself does not make that overwhelming mass of public opinion which alone will enable you to deal effectively with the House of Lords.

At anyrate, it was not sufficient to justify action in the last days of the last session. I would ask you to remember two vital circumstances in connection with the present attitude of the Government towards the House of Lords. In the first place, at the last general election you gave the Government no mandate to deal with the House of Lords; and

in the second place, even if you had, you did not give the Government a sufficient majority to deal with it. Therefore, in my opinion, we should not merely have been guilty of levity and want of forethought, we should have been culpable and criminal, if, without a mandate and without a sufficient majority, we had risked all the measures —and there were many of them, on the acknowledgment of Mr. Chamberlain himself—on which you and we set store, in order to cast them into the seething whirlpool of a constitutional agitation. As leaders of the Liberal party we should, in my opinion, have merited, if we had pursued any such course, not your applause and your confidence, but your severest censure and severest condemnation. If you are going to proceed and enter upon this great campaign you will have to walk warily; you will have to work with perseverance. You will have not to expect the most prompt and immediate results. You will not carry the House of Lords by storming or by a rush. You will rather have to imitate that great captain the Duke of Wellington at Torres Vedras, who intrenched carefully his position before he made his effective and his fatal attack. No, I feel "my withers unwrung" by any censure as to our tardiness. I know well that before we deal with this greatest of all constitutional questions, if we wish to deal with

it sensibly, we must bring into play the greatest constitutional force we have.

In the first place is the House of Commons. No lesser force than the House of Commons can confront the House of Lords. No lesser force than the House of Commons is competent to insist upon the possession of the privileges of the House of Commons. No lesser body than the House of Commons is able to lay down in clear and unmistakable tones the shifting in the balance of the Constitution which has been produced by the great Reform Bills of 1832, of 1867, and of 1884. It is quite clear that our first step, if we propose to deal with the House of Lords—and we do propose to deal with the House of Lords—is to bring the House of Commons into play; and how are we to bring the House of Commons into action? The House of Commons, in my opinion, after long consideration of this most difficult of subjects, can only proceed, in the first place, as it has always proceeded in its contests with the House of Lords—by resolutions. In regard to the powers of the House of Lords over finances, they were restrained once, twice, and thrice by resolutions of the House of Commons. As regards the powers of the House of Lords to interfere with elections for the House of Commons, those have been equally restrained by resolution of the House of

Commons. But the great resolution which I suppose we should have in our mind in passing the resolution which will assert the privileges of the House of Commons as against the irresponsible control of the House of Lords, would be the resolution of 1678, as I think it is, which asserts the free and uncontrollable right of the House of Commons to represent the people in matters of finance. And I suppose—of course I do not pledge myself at this moment to the exact form of resolution, but I take it that that resolution would declare in clear and unmistakable terms, what I have once before said, in a phrase which I have often heard since, that the House of Commons in the partnership with the House of Lords is unmistakably the predominant partner. I hear you say, "But the House of Commons has passed such resolutions before." I think there was some little resolution of this kind passed this year, but there will be one vital and essential and pervading difference between such a resolution as I suggest and any resolution that has been passed before,—because this resolution will be passed at the instance and on the responsibility of the Government itself. It will be the duty of the Government to move the House of Commons to pass such a resolution, and I cannot doubt that the House of Commons will do so. It will be the

duty of the Government to move the House of Commons to pass such a resolution, and, if they do pass it, remember that never before in the history of Parliament has such a resolution, at the instance and on the responsibility of the Government, been passed in the House of Commons against the House of Lords. What will it represent? The joint demand of the executive Government of the day and of the House of Commons for the revision of the Constitution, and in that way the question will enter in itself on a new phase. That resolution will stand for ever upon the journals of the House. No Government, however bold, however cynical it may be, that may eventually succeed ours will be bold enough or cynical enough to propose its reversal. Not all the perfumes of Araby itself will wash that resolution out of the books of the House. Not even if the verdict of the country should go against us on that resolution would, I believe, any leader of the House of Commons be bold enough to propose its reversal.

But the verdict of the House of Commons, the verdict of the country, will not be against us. I feel as sure of the country as I do of the House of Commons. Neither the House of Commons nor the country would stultify themselves by sending up a majority to reverse any such resolution as

that, and therefore we may consider that if such a resolution be passed it will stand, perhaps not as the laws of the Medes and the Persians,—because we are not living in the times of the Medes and the Persians,—but as substantive a resolution as the resolution of 1678, to which I have alluded. Well, if that be so, the resolution in itself would be a new charter, or, as the Americans would say, a new constitutional amendment, and this would be the first act of a drama of which perhaps we may have the third and the fourth and the fifth as well as the second. But, gentlemen, you may ask, "Will this be enough? The House of Lords may snap their fingers at your resolution. They may say, 'We have had resolutions of this kind before, and we do not care a fig for your resolution.'" Well, I admit that in my judgment it will not be enough. Powerful as the House of Commons is for such a purpose as this, it must call on a power even greater than itself. That power can only be given, that strength can only be afforded, that inspiration which I have been derided for asking can only be afforded by the people of Great Britain. Nothing else will suffice for us. To this august assembly we will appeal. We will ask you to give us strength and afford a majority and a mandate to deal with this question, and to come back empowered to deal in your name with the

question of constitutional revision. The Government then will put these forces in motion at the proper time. It will ask the House of Commons to pass such a resolution as I have indicated, and at the proper time it will endeavour to appeal to the country on such a resolution. Why do I say, "At the proper time"? Why do I not say, "Do it at once"? Why do I not say, "Call Parliament together, and put the resolution at once before them, and at once ask the Queen to grant the Ministry a dissolution on this resolution"? I think the members of the House of Commons would answer this question without the slightest difficulty. In the first place, the course of this Government is not entirely run. We hope to pass some useful, if not much useful, legislation before we end this Parliament; and, in the second place, it would be rather hard to punish the House of Commons for the faults of the House of Lords. Well, then, this is the second act. The first act is a resolution; the second act is the appeal to the country to support that resolution. Beyond that I cannot go to-night, for the will of the people is the final and supreme court of appeal. It will be for the nation to decide between the House of Lords and between its own responsible representatives, and therefore what we shall be particularly asking you is this, for a direct popular reference such as

in other countries is called a referendum—for a direct popular reference as to whether you desire a revision of the Constitution in this sense or whether you do not. We think, then, that the time has come, or has nearly come, for that, for a free popular reference to the people of Great Britain and Ireland to settle the Constitution of this country once for all, not in reference merely to tradition, but in reference also to accomplished facts. Then will come your part. The Government will have done its part, and it will then be your turn. If you have come to the conviction that the House of Lords understands your wishes better than do your own representatives, you will give effect by your verdict to that impression. You will dispense with your representation, and abide contentedly by the unbiassed, the patriarchal, and the mellow wisdom of the House of Lords. You will thank us for having done you the favour of being born. It will be unnecessary any further to go through the musty and superfluous process of popular election, for you will have beside you a self-constituted body that will save you any trouble of the kind. But if you take a different view, if for years you have been chafing under the foot of the House of Lords, if for years you have been wondering at this strange survival of an almost antediluvian period, if for years you have been instructing your repre-

sentatives to do all that in them lies to maintain your interests against their influence, then you will make ready for the fight. You will remember, as I have told you before, that in this great contest there lie behind you to inspire you all those great reforms, those great aspirations and great measures upon which you have set your hearts. Before you lie all the forces of prejudice and privilege; before you lie the earthworks behind which are concealed, as I have said, the enemies whom you long to fight, whom you have fought so long. Let me say, if you are prepared to go into this fight, fight as your forefathers fought, fight with their stubborn, persistent, indomitable will. Fight as they fought in Yorkshire, as those old Ironsides fought in Yorkshire, never knowing when they were beaten, and determined not to be beaten. Fight—as they would have said to you—fight, not in the arm of the flesh, but with the arm of the spirit. Fight by the means of educating your fellow-men—not as to the object, for in that I maintain you are clear, but as to the proper means of attaining that object. But if you believe that this Government are in earnest in this matter you will come to their support. We fling down the gauntlet. It is for you to take it up.

WELSH DISESTABLISHMENT

At Cardiff (National Liberal Federation), 18th January 1895

I AM deeply grateful to you for this resolution of confidence in the Government, and for the manner in which it has been proposed and seconded. The proposer [Dr. Spence Watson] is known to all England as, though not in Parliament, much more important than most members of Parliament, as being president of the National Liberal Federation; and as for the seconder [Mr. D. A. Thomas, M.P.], I fold the returning prodigal to my arms. Gentlemen, I should be vain and I should be mistaken, if I took more than a very small part of this resolution as being devoted to myself. The task of legislation, the hard work of the Government, falls mainly on my colleagues in the Commons; and among those colleagues, who have all done strenuous and admirable work, we must all enthusiastically give the first place to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who has laboured so brilliantly and so effectively for the Government,

and who in so doing has left so permanent a mark on the financial legislation of the country. Now, gentlemen, this meeting, I suppose, represents that break-up of the Liberal party which is so frequent a theme of Conservative orators, and lately of Mr. Balfour himself. But in any case it is difficult to feel that this is not a memorable occasion, for we meet on the battlefield. We meet on the field where the first blow is to be struck, for, as you know, your great Welsh measure is the first that we put in the front of our programme. But, gentlemen, if it be memorable to you, it is much more memorable to me. It is more than six and twenty years since I first visited Cardiff, since I was last in Cardiff, when I came to the coming of age of my old college friend, Lord Bute. Well, one feels almost like a Rip Van Winkle when one reads the figures of the progress that you have made in the meantime. When I was last here you had a population of 40,000. I come back and find you with a population of 150,000. When I was last here your rateable value was about £150,000, and it is now over £860,000. And as for your shipping, I cannot get the figures of the year when I was here in 1868, but ten years before that your shipping amounted to a million and a half tons, and now it amounts to no less than fifteen million tons. Such progress resembles the progress

of one of the American cities of the West. It is a proud and pleasing reflection for the inhabitants and the citizens of Cardiff to see so rapid a progress, combined with so material and splendid a result.

But, gentlemen, this visit is memorable to me for another reason, and it is this: It is the first time that I have been privileged to address the National Liberal Federation, and on such an occasion I cannot help asking, What are the purposes and functions of that Federation? I take it that your first and your most important function is this: To thrash out the various issues that lie before the Liberal party. For that purpose you must discuss many questions, and you must look far ahead. That task is comparatively easy, because you are bound and circumscribed by no limit. You might, if you choose, survey the whole field of human endeavour, and mark out in each department what to promote and what to avoid, and no one could blame you. But after this task of thrashing out, there comes a much more delicate and difficult operation, and that is, the operation of winnowing, an operation which has to be performed before every session by that committee which you call the Cabinet, and which is subject to all those influences which Mr. Thomas has so graphically described. Now, gentlemen, the Cabinet have to select from

a vast field the Bills which they think should be brought forward in the session. This is always an arduous task, but it is especially arduous for the present Government. We have inherited a vast programme of measures of first-rate importance. That has been inherited by us, not simply from various meetings of the Federation and various declarations of our leaders, but also from the inherent necessities of the case, because it has been our task to adapt to existing circumstances the new state of things created by the Reform Bill of 1884, to accommodate the new wine of that Reform Bill and the new spirit to the old bottles of the Constitution; and I venture to say that that is a very arduous and a heavy piece of work. Now, this programme as it stands now, without any addition, would require many energetic years in which a strong Government, supported by a united and powerful Liberal party, would have to do their best to carry into effect. But what is sometimes forgotten is this, that we cannot pass all the measures of this programme simultaneously; that we cannot bring them all into line, and that we cannot order a simultaneous advance like the last charge of our army at Waterloo, without limiting the session to a barren record of first readings.

I would further ask you to remember, that in

addition to this programme, we have entered upon a long foreseen and inevitable campaign, a campaign which has been coming nearer to us day by day, and year by year, until we can no longer honourably avoid it. I mean the campaign against the House of Lords. That campaign alone would tax the energies of the Liberal party at its best, because it cannot fail to be long, it cannot fail to be arduous, and you will need all your energies to surmount the difficulties which it involves. This, then, is our position as regards objects. What is our position as regards means? Remember, gentlemen, that very few measures of the first class can be carried through in a single session, even by a Tory Government. Well, you laugh, but a Tory Government has in one way much greater facilities for the business of legislation than we have, because whereas we have to deal with two Chambers, one of which is permanently hostile, the Tory Government has only got to deal with one. That being the case, we have to consider whether, with the barrier of the House of Lords permanently placed against Liberal legislation, we shall give the House of Commons an opportunity of passing Liberal measures, though certain that they must meet with disaster elsewhere; or whether we shall bow our neck to the yoke of the House of Lords, and only introduce those Bills

/hich we think their Lordships are likely to pass. " Never "!] Gentlemen, it is a very easy thing to ay " Never," but if you do not consult the sus- eptibilities and the attitude of the House of Lords, he Liberal Government stands a very good chance f ending its session as a barren session, and that, 1 my opinion, is one of the intolerable disabilities nd one of the intolerable degradations which make our campaign against the House of Lords inevitable.

I say, then, that the task of winnowing is difficult. But we know also the bewildering amount of oratory which every Bill of the first class entails. It almost seems to me as if an enormous amount of debating and speaking is considered the due of a Bill of the first class, very much in the same way as an Indian prince of very high rank is entitled to a greater salute of artillery than a prince of lower rank; and, I must confess, I much wish that some of our Bills of the first rank could in respect of debating be treated as Bills of a lower rank. We know, then, that a great multiplicity of speeches, and of repeated speeches, is considered necessary to every Bill of the first class. And we know the creaking and the groaning of the old constitutional machine when it is turning out any great measure. We know also the number of complicated stages through which, by the wisdom

of Parliament, every measure has to be sifted and strained before it can hope to arrive at any good result; and therefore you must bear in mind, when our process of winnowing is going on, that there are only very few measures of the first class that we can hope to pass even through the House of Commons, and fewer still to pass the House of Lords. I do not think that the country and the Liberal party are sufficiently alive to the considerations that I have laid before you; for, whilst this process of winnowing is going on, all Cabinet Ministers are subject to a bombardment of correspondence—and I venture to say that the correspondence of even Cabinet Ministers on this point would yield in multiplicity to that of our excellent Welsh whip, Mr. Ellis; but we, at anyrate, are bombarded by appeals, some of them menacing, some of them coaxing and cajoling, but all of them extremely earnest, and praying that the particular hobby of the writer shall be made the first Government Bill. Well, gentlemen, from our correspondence we might gather that each article of the programme was equally urgent and supreme, and each article of the programme equally incapable of postponement.

Any delay in pushing forward each measure that has been recorded in what is called the Newcastle programme implies, we are told, the

alienation of all the earnest and thoughtful members of the Liberal party—in fact, the backbone of the Liberal party. And I have come to the conclusion that the Liberal party is extremely rich in backbones. I do not suppose that it can have too many backbones, but my correspondence makes me feel that there is a multiplicity of backbones in the Liberal party, all preparing to be alienated if certain measures are not pushed forward. Well, I frankly tell you that I do not believe all this; I do not believe that the earnest and thoughtful Liberals are always ready to take this kind of action. I believe that the earnest and thoughtful Liberals watch the political barometer, and the courses and currents, sometimes even in silence; and would even go so far in the extremity of their forbearance as to give some measure of confidence to the Government in laying out the plan of campaign. After all, the Government, owing to these means and to others, has exceptional means of information, and the Government has more to lose than any other body of men by miscalculation; for they have the responsibility, and on them will be laid the blame. These, then, being the difficulties of our position in the process of winnowing, I think it much better to lay them frankly and freely before this assembly, which includes the National Liberal Federation,—a body

which, at anyrate, may claim to be distinctively composed of earnest and thoughtful Liberals,—for I believe that there is no policy so fatal as that which is popularly, but I believe wrongly, ascribed to the ostrich, which, when it sees the pressing peril, is supposed to bury its head in the sands, and to have thereby thought to have got rid of the danger when it passes out of its range of vision. These are our difficulties, but these are the difficulties of wealth and affluence, wealth of ideas and affluence of energy, and they are difficulties in their nature nearly akin to sources of strength; and it is only that they may be mitigated in their power that I lay them before this assembly to-night.

The difficulties of our opponents are very different in their nature. Those are not their difficulties, the difficulties of an affluence of ideas and a superfluous wealth of energy. Their difficulties are those of sterility and barrenness. If it would not be disrespectful to them, I should like to say that their present condition reminds me of a fraudulent raree show at a country fair. You are invited to step up. There is the big partner with the big drum, there is the junior partner with the pan-pipes, and there is the handy young man from over the way with a bushel of programmes ready to hand to every passer-by. So, sir, the bewildered voter

or the bewildered passer-by is enticed by these promises to enter the tent, and is somewhat disappointed to find nothing inside.

What, indeed, is the last programme that was laid before us by the last Conservative leader who has spoken? It was Mr. Balfour, at Manchester, who gave it you, and he said that there were three points — cardinal points — of their policy. The first was the maintenance of the Empire. I should like to know in what respect this Government has fallen short of its duties in respect of the Empire? The next was to have Socialist legislation, without the last syllable and to call it social legislation. Well, I should like to know what Conservative Government is likely to do as much as we have done in the way not merely of social legislation but of social administration? And the last task of the Conservative Government would be the preservation of institutions from destruction. What institution is it that we propose to destroy? Why, gentlemen, we have distinctly announced that we do not propose to touch the House of Lords, we only propose to adjust the relations of that body with the House of Commons. We should be told, I suppose, that we propose to destroy Churches; but we do not propose to destroy Churches, though we do purpose to remove two Churches from the position of unjust predominance which in our

opinion they ought not to occupy. If then, I may draw any deduction from Mr. Balfour's speech it would be this, that the process of winnowing with the Conservative party will not be a difficult one; but with us, on the other hand, it is what the French call an embarrassment of riches. Now, gentlemen, that process of winnowing is still going on, and I therefore cannot state to you to-night what the exact results of it may be. But on one or two points I may state quite plainly what the position may be assumed to be.

In the first place, we are anxious that the programme of business for 1895 should be a business programme. We are anxious, therefore, to announce at the commencement of the session in the Queen's Speech only those measures which we see a reasonable prospect of passing. I myself think that it is quite rational and proper for a Government with a small majority, and for which both its friends and its opponents prophesy but a short lease of existence—as was our case in 1892—I quite admit that for such a Government it is proper, in their first Queen's Speech, not so much to limit themselves to what is practicable from a business point of view, as to lay before Parliament what they hope to effect if only life and health be given them. But I think if life and health be given, if life be prolonged and health be given, it

is objectionable to repeat that process; because the Government are pledged to the policy, and it is unnecessary on each occasion to repeat those pledges. What we have, then, to do is to lay before Parliament a list of those measures which we think can be, and should be, passed in the current session. To do more than that is to confuse the public issues and the minds of the people at large; so I ask you to remember, when you come to read and to hear that document, that the principle and basis on which it is framed is that of being a business statement of a business programme.

My second point is this, that that limitation of the Queen's Speech does not affect you. You stand first on the list; I am not sure that that announcement would be received so warmly in every part of the United Kingdom. I am afraid that in my own native country of Scotland there are some heartburnings at the precedence given to Wales. They are heartburnings expressed in a genial and friendly spirit, but they are still heartburnings of that nature which Mr. Thomas has so graphically described. Now, gentlemen, I do not think that that complaint is unnatural, but, on the other hand, my fellow-countrymen must remember what is our position. It is impossible for us to pass two Disestablishment Bills through the House of Commons in one session, more

especially when we remember the certain fate which awaits both of them in the House of Lords. All we can do, having given precedence to Wales, for reasons which I explained to my fellow-countrymen at Glasgow—all that we can do is to give a clear and tangible proof that our policy in respect to Scottish Disestablishment is tangible and unchanged. Well, I promised at Glasgow that I would endeavour to effect that, if it could be done without any sacrifice of parliamentary time. To do that, I only see one possible course. There is a Bill of Sir Charles Cameron's, an excellent Bill, which has been drawn for the purposes of Scottish Disestablishment. A Government would no doubt prefer—because, I take it, it would be a more proper and a more dignified course—to introduce a Bill of their own; but if, as I think must be the case, the Government are unable to do this, and if no better method of giving effect to their wishes arise, they will be prepared to adopt Sir Charles Cameron's Bill as their own, and so to lay before the Scottish people, before a dissolution occurs, a practical measure of Disestablishment in its broad scope (reserving the right of freedom as to details), which they, in due course, if life and health once more be given them, will be prepared to present to Parliament.

We now come to the general question raised by

both Scotland and Wales with respect to Disestablishment. It seems to me that there are three points of view from which Establishments may be regarded. There is, first, the clear, hard, logical school, which regards all preference given by the public or the State, or the public in its character of the State, to any form of faith as injudicious, derogatory, and degrading both to the State and to the Church. It holds that there should be absolute religious equality, and that each Church should be supported by its own adherents. That is a general proposition which it is difficult to dispute, and which, if we were beginning with a clean slate, there would probably be none found to dispute.

But, as we are not beginning with a clean slate, there is a second school which regards the question of Church Establishments as a question of national option. It holds that it is a question for the decision of the nation which is affected, and that, if it be really the national wish to recognise religion in the shape of Establishment, there is nothing absolutely immoral in the carrying out of that wish. It is quite possible that a Church may be happier, freer, more powerful, if you will, without the fetters of Establishment. But if, on the other hand, the mass of the nation holds to a Church Establishment as it exists, and does not wish to

disturb it, this second school, of which I have spoken, holds that there is nothing immoral in a nation carrying out its wish. When you recollect in how many worse ways money may be spent by the public, it is, perhaps, not an unreasonable proposition. You might, for example, take the case of Spain, where the nation is practically at one in its religious creed, and I do not think that even the most zealous Disestablisher would say that there is anything absolutely incongruous or immoral in the wish of the Spanish nation to give some support to ministers of religion, whom all equally obey. Well, my creed on this point is very simple indeed, and it applies to much more than to Church Establishments.

To my mind, the Church and the Establishment are two perfectly distinct matters. The Church is too high for me to discuss to-night; the Establishment is not too high. An ecclesiastical establishment, like other establishments, must rest upon the deliberate will of the people, or it rests upon nothing. That I believe to be sound doctrine. That was the doctrine and basis on which the Irish Church was disestablished. It was a missionary Church that converted nobody. It was an alien Church that alienated everybody. It kept for a minority what was meant for the nation. And so, coming, as it did, as a stranger to Ireland, repudiated by

the mass of the nation, it passed away. You know another Church Establishment which embodies these characteristics, and which, in like manner, is doomed. I may be asked, in reference to this doctrine, do Churches, does religion, does the Christian faith rely upon the chance will and vote of the majority of the people? That is the question I shall be asked by people in whom the warmth of heart hardly compensates for confusion of head. My reply is simply, No! The Church does not rely on such a majority, but the Establishment does.

Now, we hear much in these days about the State. This, that, and the other is to be provided by the State; as if the State were a beneficent fairy with a private gold mine at its disposal. Gentlemen, you know as well as I do that the State for all those purposes is only the nation under another name. If the State, that is the nation, is to provide any of these things, it is the nation, that is the State, which will have to pay for them; and if it is the State, that is the nation, which is to establish and countenance a religion, it is the nation, that is the State, which will have to support it. Well, under these circumstances when you consider the matter in this cool and abstract way, when you remember that an Establishment can only exist by the will of the State,

and that the State only means the nation, the talk of an Establishment long continuing against the will of the nation is as if you spoke of water running permanently uphill. There are no doubt temporary circumstances, circumstances temporary in their nature, which enable Establishments to exist for a longer time against the will of the nation than they otherwise would; those I will discuss in a moment.

Besides these two schools of thought from which Disestablishment is regarded, there is a third, with which you are familiar in the Principality, which regards Disestablishment as robbery and as sacrilege. I have never understood what the application of these words may be. As to robbery. If the State, that is, if the nation, chooses to apply funds for one purpose, I suppose it has an equal right to divert and set them apart for another. It is what the State is constantly doing It is what the Charity Commissioners do, I will not say daily, but certainly monthly and yearly, and have been doing for the last thirty years. What it has done with these endowments, the State, I suppose, may do with another. We all remember what the State did once with these endowments. How it took them at the time of the Reformation and handed them from the old Church, not all of them to the Reformed Church, but to the barons,

great and small, to the adherents of the Court, to the laity, many of whom are ardent Conservatives now, but who in their blind enthusiasm for Church Establishment have not, so far as I know, proffered any restitution of this alienated money. Gentlemen, the State took them and then assigned them, and that in my phraseology was an act of national option, which may be repeated at any moment. If, therefore, I am correct in my reading of these endowments, and if my statement as to the Reformation is correct, it is not wise for the defenders of the Establishment to rest too much on the rights of property, because if the right of indefeasible property rests with anyone, it rests, not with the Reformed Church, but with the Roman Catholic Church. But we shall be told that that is a question of robbery, a wrongful diversion from one Church to another, and that, if you intend to secularise this property, it is nothing less than sacrilege.

Well, sacrilege is a hard word. I will not attempt to give you my own opinion on the point, but I remember hearing Bishop Thirlwall, one of the greatest bishops of our generation, make a speech in the House of Lords on this subject, and I shall make you no apology for reading an extract from it. "I must own," said Bishop Thirlwall, "that, in this sense, the phrase, 'robbery of God,' grates upon my ear. It seems

to me to correspond to a view of the Deity which is neither Christian nor even Judaical, but heathenish. When I open the Old Testament I find several passages, familiar, I have no doubt, to your Lordships, in which the Jewish people are severely reproved for cherishing the vain and superstitious notion, common to the heathen nations around them, that material offerings might be accepted by the Most High as supplying some want of the divine nature. My Lords, when I read those passages, when I read others in the New Testament, in which the sacrifices with which God is well-pleased are described, together with the nature of a pure religion or worship, I am led to the conclusion that no material offerings are so acceptable to the Almighty as those which are most beneficial to man. Let me suppose a case, not wholly imaginary, to illustrate my meaning. A wealthy and munificent gentleman builds a magnificent cathedral in Dublin; a wealthy and munificent lady builds a public market in London. My Lords, I believe that each of those acts was, in the intention of the donor, an offering to God, and I believe each of them to have been an equally acceptable offering to Him. But let me suppose that a fund had been bequeathed to be appropriated at the discretion of a trustee to one or the other of those purposes, I should like to know on

what principle the decision of that trustee—if he were worthy to exercise so important a trust—ought to depend. I think I shall have the assent of your Lordships when I say that his decision ought to depend not on the superior sanctity of the destination, but on the local need or the general usefulness. It is not a question between God and man, but between one kind of gift beneficial to society and another. My Lords, the word 'sacrilege' has been heard very often of late in this House, and I must say its use reminds me of some instructive pages in the history of the early Christian Church. The cry of 'sacrilege' was raised against St. Ambrose; and it was raised by a party with which, I am sure, neither any of my right reverend brethren, nor the noble Lord, the chairman of committees [Lord Redesdale], feel the slightest sympathy—the Arians. And on what ground was this cry raised? Why, because St. Ambrose had sold the sacred vessels of the church of Milan in order to apply the proceeds to the profane purpose of ransoming prisoners who had fallen into the hands of the Goths. My Lords, in my opinion, that was not the least meritorious or the least holy act of that holy man's life. And observe, what does it imply? It implies that—in the opinion of one who was undoubtedly a very sincere Christian,

and not at all a Low Churchman—circumstances might arise in which Church property, even while it continued to be capable of serving its original purpose, might be rightly and fitly diverted to another and a wholly different use. I am not saying that in this case such circumstances have arisen; but what I say is, that the possibility of such circumstances arising, if that be admitted, at once transfers the question to the broad ground of general expediency and common utility. It shows that such expressions as 'sacrilege' and 'robbery of God' applied to this subject are as irrelevant and misapplied as they are irritating and offensive." I think I need say no more on the question of sacrilege.

But we are also told that Disestablishment unchristianises the State; that it removes the recognition by the State of Christianity in religion, and in that way unchristianises the State. Well, all I can say is this, that if that be true, the State must be in a very bad way. If a State is, in reality, Christian, it certainly does not need the outward symbol of an Establishment to prove it; and if a State is not Christian, an Establishment is merely an hypocrisy and a sham. Why, gentlemen, how about Ireland? We heard all these prophecies about Ireland and all these statements about Ireland, when the Church was disestab-

lished. Has Ireland ceased to be Christian? Has Ireland lost the vigour of either of her Churches—the Church to which the mass of the people belong or the two other Churches, Protestant Churches, which are in the minority? These Churches were never so vigorous. Never did Ireland so richly deserve her old title of the island of saints. And at this moment she is not satisfied with her own development within her own borders, but she has lately sent out, perhaps with more zeal than judgment, one of her Protestant Archbishops to consecrate a Protestant Bishop in Spain. I argue, then, that a Church which relies on Establishment stands by that confession self-condemned. A Church may very well argue that it is better off for having material and independent sources of revenue at command. No one can blame its champions for defending these revenues as long as they can, so long as their arguments are not carried too far either in scope or in style.

But though I understand the pain which Disestablishment causes to many excellent and devout people, they must remember this, that no great reform can be carried out without great pangs, and great wrenchings, and great searchings of heart, and great lookings back—ay, and as the result of looking back, as we have experienced in the Liberal party, a considerable number of

pillars of salt. But to contend that these material supplies or the privilege of seats in the House of Lords are necessary to the life and the vigour of a Church is to make a fatal confusion between the essence and the incidents of a Church. The essence of a Church is spiritual; the inspiration, the tradition, the gracious message, the divine mission, the faith that guides us through the mystery of life to the mystery of death,—all these were produced in poverty, in a manger, in the cot of the carpenter. They flourished under persecution. Nothing can be so remote from their essence and their spirit as the wealth, or power, or dignities of this world. Establishment and endowment at most represent the gifts of the laity to the temple—the ornaments, the rich essences, the corn and wine and oil, which depend for their merit on the willingness and enthusiasm of the offerers, but which lose all value and all significance when they are wrung out against the will of the people.

Then, gentlemen, the question arises, Is the State Church in Wales an alien Church? I know that some of your pastors and masters are very fond of chopping figures on this question. They spend a good deal of time in that, and their powers of calculation are so marvellous that they seem to be a kind of spiritual Babbages, although I confess

I am not always able to follow them in their computations. Every man who is not for us is reckoned against us. Every man who does not vote at a parliamentary election is reckoned as a zealous, though silent, defender of the Church, as one who in his zeal preferred to remain by his own fireside to encountering the discomforts of the polling-booth. So also, every person, every man, woman, or child, who is not a member of one of the four great Nonconformist bodies in Wales, whether he be a Roman Catholic or belong to some other dissenting body, is reckoned as a sheep in the fold of the Establishment. Now, these are mysteries to me. I hope they serve the cause of truth, but I, at anyrate, shall not discuss them. So far as I am concerned, they do not concern me; they in no wise affect my opinion on this question. For me, I am content to take, as we do in most other cases, the parliamentary representation as a test of feeling on this question, and parliamentary representation, you will remember, elected mainly, or even solely, on this question of Church Disestablishment. Whatever may have been the imperial issues presented to the Welsh people since 1880, no one, I think, will contend that any has taken precedence or even occupied so large a part of the mind of the electors as this question of the

continued existence of the State Church in Wales. Then, if we are allowed to take the parliamentary representation as a test of the real strength of the State Church army in Wales, we come to those remarkable figures, and they are the only figures with which I will trouble you. What is the result of the last four General Elections? In 1880 you had four defenders of the State Establishment. In 1885 you had four. In 1886 they rose to the magnificent total of five. But I am sorry to say that at the last election they had undergone a humiliating reduction to three. Well, gentlemen, I do not know that I am to take these figures as the permanent view of Wales upon this question. ["Yes!"] Oh, you say, "Yes," but you have to watch the signs of the times.

You are not perhaps aware that a great constitutional party, under the guidance of a great constitutional Duke, dealing with a great constitutional question, in a great constitutional way have met together in a London palace to organise funds and to select candidates for the battle that is about to take place on the question of the Established Church in Wales. A subscription was opened, and while there were some munificent contributions, I will not hurt the feelings of the promoters by hinting at what I am informed was the result of the popular subscription.

Now, gentlemen, I agree with you in laughing at all that. It is chiefly remarkable for the light which it throws on the view which a great constitutional party takes of the great constitutional rule—that peers should in no way, direct or indirect, interfere in parliamentary elections. This, at anyrate, is clear, that a Church Establishment in Wales is an alien Church; and that, if you had to deal with that Church Establishment in a National Council of Wales, that Church Establishment would be lost in a week. Well, I contend that a Church in that position is not so placed that it can ever benefit the nation among which it serves or the Church itself, or even the cause of religion itself. It tends to alienate each day the people still further from the Church, and it may even tend, in the heat of party passion, to give some minds a disgust for religion so protected and so endowed. Then there is this further curse upon an Establishment in this position, namely, that those who have to defend it against the nation which repudiates it are forced to impugn the nation itself; they are forced to do that which Mr. Burke, with all his genius, declared to be impossible for him to do, namely, to draw an indictment against the nation. On the other hand, also, they are forced to appear in the invidious and disagreeable light of defending, not the spiritual,

but the material claims of their Church. And in that way these ministers of a religion which is meant, ordained, to bring peace among nations and goodwill among men, are the unhappy and involuntary, and, I doubt not, the unwilling agents for bringing, not peace, but strife to the nation in which they live.

But you may ask how, if the State Church is so alien, does the nation tolerate it; and if the Establishment depends on the will of the nation that surrounds it, how is it that the Establishment manages to survive? I am afraid there are two causes for that. The first is the House of Commons. If your 34 members were left alone to settle this question, as I have already said, you would make short work of the Church Establishment. But unfortunately you have only a small representation in the House of Commons, which comprises 670 members, and therefore your turn for legislation comes but seldom. It is hard for the 34—and I again appeal to Mr. Thomas—it is hard for the 34 to direct the attention of the other 636 members to what concerns those members in so slight a degree. And it is hard for the representatives of the other thirty seven millions of population which are comprised in the United Kingdom to give the first and the foremost place to a measure which affects only a million and a half.

I may remark, however, in an aside, you have not done so badly under a Liberal Government. I will only refer, in a word, to the sterling services which Mr. Acland, who, I think, is more than half a Welshman, has rendered to Wales and to Welsh Education. Then you have a Land Commission, which is not merely a pledge of policy, but a good Land Commission in itself. And lastly, you have had the first position given to your Church Bill during the next session. So, I do not think the Liberal Government has done badly, or your 34 members either. But what is the result of this calculation? That the Church Establishment which you repudiate is kept in existence, when a Tory Government is in, entirely by English votes. Irishmen vote with you for its Disestablishment; Scotsmen vote with you for its Disestablishment, and the maintenance of the Establishment of Wales is confided not merely to the three valiant beings of whom I have spoken, but is really supported by English members of the House of Commons who represent places south of the Humber. And while you are badly placed, my native country of Scotland is worse placed, because you sometimes get a Bill which applies to you in common with England, but we in Scotland are so situated, by law and character, and by language perhaps, that we invariably require a separate Bill for ourselves.

Domestic legislation, then, bids fair to stand still sometimes, both in Scotland and in Wales.

But this leads me to a point on which I must say a word. I, for my part, would gladly see both these ecclesiastical questions settled in Scotland and in Wales. That would be much more satisfactory to all parties concerned, both to you who are affected by these Establishments, and to those members of the House of Commons who are not directly affected by them. After all, there are no questions which are so local or lie so near to inhabitants as these ecclesiastical questions. If you pass the Tweed northward, you leave Episcopacy and you go into Presbyterianism. If you cross the Marches into Wales you find Episcopacy indeed in a somewhat frail condition, but you find Nonconformity as a predominant fact; and if you cross the Channel into Ireland you will find largely predominant there the Roman Catholic faith. I think, therefore, I am justified in saying, that in these four kingdoms or principalities which constitute the United Kingdom there are no questions so local as these ecclesiastical questions. The more I see of our political system the more I am convinced of this, that in a large measure of devolution, subject to imperial control, lies the secret of the future working of our Empire. Daily also, in my opinion, that devolution comes nearer and nearer. For the

last few years much of the work of Parliament has consisted in handing over business to local representative institutions. You have now representative bodies as before in towns, in counties, in villages, and in parishes; as the people get more and more familiarised with this idea, the easier you will find its extension; and only in some further devolution, subject, as I have said, to the Imperial Parliament, will you find it possible to work that vast and complicated organisation which is called the British Empire. It has been by such a system of devolution that we have been able to found, outside these kingdoms, the greatest Empire that the world has ever seen; and we shall find in the same principle the solution of many, if not most, of our difficulties inside. In that respect the cause of Ireland stands first but not last. The Liberal party, in my opinion, will never find its full strength until it has enlisted all the power and sympathy and freedom which it would gain in every part of the United Kingdom by the systematised devolution of local business to the localities themselves. Well, that is as much as I can say on that head.

But there is another and more permanent barrier which opposes itself to your wishes in respect to Welsh Disestablishment. I need not mention to this assembly the attitude of the House of Lords. You know how it treats Welsh matters; how it

treats those Welsh popular schemes of education which have been sent up to it during the past two sessions. I have no time to-night to deal with the House of Lords, and there really is not the slightest necessity for my doing so. In the first place, I have said freely and frankly in speeches, which you may have read, at Bradford, at Glasgow, and at Devonport, all that is in my mind on that subject; and in the second place, it is not necessary to say it to you, because it is not necessary to preach to the converted. So long as things are as at present, the cause on which you have set your heart has no chance of passing the House of Lords. It would be rejected by the House of Lords by a majority of exactly the same proportion as that by which your Welsh representatives would pass it if it were left to them. Well, gentlemen, the House of Lords is indeed the supreme question of the hour, and all that I will say upon it to-night is this—it is the supreme question of the hour because it covers and underlies simultaneously so many of the questions in which you are interested. All I will say on it to-night is this, that as treated by our opponents it is a mysterious question. When it was first raised the House of Lords was a sacred institution, on behalf of which they were prepared to shed the last drop of their blood. But the gyrations of the

Tory party on that question have since been very remarkable. The constitution of the House of Lords is now universally allowed to be faulty and defective, while at the same time it is described as a necessary bulwark of property, and the last observation is that it is a necessary bulwark for the defence of popular rights. Yes, gentlemen, its latest apologist, and a very intelligent man he is—Professor Albert Dicey—calls it the protector of the rights of the nation. Besides that, its function, as it seems, is to test the mandates that are given to the Liberal party by the country, and to refer all Liberal Bills, and, if possible, all Liberal members, back to the constituencies that returned them. I have not, I believe, exhausted its functions, but these have become in the course of discussion so multifarious and so remarkable that I am sometimes beginning to wonder where these functions begin and where they end. And —but I must warn you here that I am speaking ironically—I am sometimes led to wonder if it is not the House of Commons that really ought to be done away with. But at anyrate you may ask me this: Why is it, if this question is so supreme and so important, that you do not submit your resolution at once to the judgment of Parliament, and then to the judgment of the people? I will give you only one reason for that, and that reason is

sufficient; because if it is submitted to the judgment of Parliament, it must at once be submitted to the judgment of the people, and that its submission to Parliament involves an instant dissolution.

But before this good Parliament is sent about its business I want to get something more done for the people. Your Welsh, your Scottish questions—*your* Welsh, *my* Scottish questions—even Irish questions, only interest, as a rule, a comparatively small section of the community; but there are other and further measures which interest every section of the community, and I for one should see with regret the Liberal party seeking re-election without attempting to deal with them. I put first, not in order, but for convenience, the question of the control of the liquor traffic, which is so burning a question all over the country. Well, then, there is another question. I regard it as a great discredit to Parliament that while we have democratised the suffrage, and while we boast of our anxiety that representatives of the working classes shall be seen in abundance in the House of Commons, we have not made their entry any cheaper or any easier than it was before we made that change. I for one should deeply regret if we met the constituencies again without having made an attempt to deal with that question. And lastly—I do not by any means exhaust the questions, but I take the three that come first to

my mind—last of all there is that question which is popularly called "one man one vote," without which that democratic suffrage to which I have alluded is in many constituencies little better than a mockery and a sham. Gentlemen, you may ask me how before a dissolution we are to get all these. My reply to that is that your fate is in your own hands. It lies with you to give the force and the impulse, and the propelling power which alone can enable a Liberal Government to pass Liberal measures. I, for my part, do not ask you for enthusiasm. I do not even desire it. Enthusiasm is a quick-burning flame, it is a feverish humour which is apt to die out as quickly as it rose, and leave behind it nothing but ashes and reaction. But what I do ask is this, that, while we do your work inside Parliament, you shall give us your cordial, your hearty, and your strenuous support outside Parliament, that you be not led away by every empty wind of vain doctrine, by every breath of gossip or of doubt; that you do not give yourself over to political sloth or political scepticism; but that you stand by the Government that is willing to stand by you. This support we ask, and indeed claim, at your hands; and I believe, in the coming session, and for the rest of this Parliament, and at the general election when it comes, we shall abundantly receive it.

BEFORE THE GENERAL ELECTION

At the Albert Hall, 5th July 1895

THERE is nothing in the Government just at an end to defend—nothing in its life, nothing in its death, nothing in its spirit, nothing in its work. It lived a noble life. It died a noble death. It passed great measures; it wrought great acts of administration. It leaves behind it a mighty surplus, it leaves business reviving, and commerce prospering. It leaves behind it a contented people. That is something to build upon, that is a treasure stored up beyond the reach of time. But, on the other side, I have nothing to attack. Every morning I ransack the newspapers in the hope of coming on that long-retained and not yet divulged declaration of policy. I am told that their policy is comprised in the word "dissolution." Dissolution of what? [A voice—"The Lords."] That may be the result, indeed. It cannot be a dissolution of the Ministry, because that is not yet formed. It cannot be a dissolution of partnership, because they are yet in the honeymoon. I should not

think, unless I knew it to be otherwise, that it could be a dissolution of Parliament, for the simple reason that, after having told us day after day, and week after week, that they held the late Government in the hollow of their hands, that they could put an end to it any moment. I felt certain that they had a great scheme of policy to lay before the country. I am the more convinced of it because, with a hurry which I will not call indecent, except [turning to Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman] in one case, they seized the seals of office; and I came naturally to the conclusion that a scheme of policy would be launched, and that, after a fitting time, in which the country could appreciate and digest it, the dissolution would take place. But, instead of this, the dissolution comes and no policy. A Cabinet of nineteen should be able to frame a policy, and yet there is no sign. I do not, of course, call that placard which at this moment covers Birmingham—I am told that it is as large as a four-roomed tenement—I do not call that placard the policy of the Government; it is only the last and latest of many unauthorised programmes. I am told, vaguely indeed, that the policy of the new Government is to be the maintenance of the Empire and social legislation. In that case, why did they turn us out? We maintained the Empire; we increased the Empire.

What is our record in social legislation? There is the Bill for regulating the hours of railway servants; there is the Employers' Liability Bill. But that is not an Act of Parliament. There is the raising of the exemptions for the income-tax, which have benefited some 350,000 people. There is the Parish Councils Act, there is the Equalisation of Rates (London) Bill, and there is the Factory Act of this session. We are told that we were a wretched Government, that thought of nothing but clinging to office. Now we have a great God-given Government, and let them see if in the long years of office which they contemplate are before them, they will be able to rival that list of measures. I myself think social administration as important as social legislation. What has this Government done? It has established fair wages and short hours in all the Government departments. It has administered the Factory Act in a new spirit; it has appointed working-men inspectors and women inspectors throughout the country. I could multiply that list, but it is not necessary to do so to-night. Well, gentlemen, if we have simply to fight—as it appears we have to fight—nothing but a blank sheet of paper, inscribed with pious aspirations, or a futile programme presented with the old modesty and the old unselfishness, I say there is nothing left for us to do but congratulate

Mr. Chamberlain on having at last attained the object of his later ambition of being the head of a united Tory Government.

There is one point in which I hope to be able to give my support to the new Government, and that is on questions of foreign policy. If there is one thing in my life I should wish to live after me, it is that, when I first went to the Foreign Office as Secretary for Foreign Affairs, I argued for, and maintained the principle of a policy of continuity in foreign administration. My view was this, that whatever our domestic differences may be at home, we should preserve a united front abroad; and that foreign statesmen and foreign courts should feel that they are dealing, not with a Ministry, possibly fleeting and possibly transient, but with a great, powerful, and united nation. Of course, even in continuity of foreign policy you may have differences of skill, differences of manipulation; and here I should do an injury to myself and the Government if I did not pay an ungrudging tribute to the way in which foreign affairs were conducted by Lord Kimberley. Suffering under the sorest and saddest of domestic bereavements, he gave his whole time and energy, and the whole of his great ability, to the work of his department with conspicuous success. I remember once I was taunted by a member of the new Government—an Under-

Secretary of State; he should have been Secretary of State for the Home Department—Mr. Jesse Collings. He said that I was a Liberal Imperialist. Well, if that be my shame, I glory in my shame, for Liberal Imperialism implies, first, the maintenance of the Empire; secondly, the opening of new areas for our surplus population; thirdly, the suppression of the slave trade; fourthly, the development of missionary enterprise; and fifthly, the development of our commerce, which so often needs it. That, if I may say so, is a digression.

There are two points of foreign policy on which I would touch for a minute to-night. One is the occupation of Chitral. The late Government never had an opportunity of announcing the unamimous conclusion at which they had arrived with respect to Chitral. They had instructed the Governor-General of India that, at the earliest possible moment, consistently with safety and with dignity, they should withdraw from Chitral. I have no time now to give the reasons for this decision; but if the new Government think of reversing it I trust they will mete out to us the measure they asked us to mete out to them, and will give us an opportunity of discussing their policy before they finally adopt it. The second question to which I would allude is that of Armenia. The late Government, in conjunction with the Governments of France and

Russia, put strong pressure on the Sultan's Government to insist on measures with regard to the Christian populations of Asia Minor, which should secure to them not merely good government, but at least security from intolerable oppression, intolerable cruelty, and intolerable barbarism. They did not ask—they did not desire to set up a separate and an autonomous Armenia, which might be the cause of umbrage and even of danger to European peace. But they did insist, and with their allies would have continued to insist at the Court of Constantinople, upon due guarantees against the recurrence of such horrors as occurred last year. I trust that the new Government—though its head has not always been discreet in his allusions to that subject—I trust, I say, that the new Government will not flinch or flag in the course we have laid out, for if otherwise, they will have an account to settle, not with the out-going Government, for that is nothing, but with the whole Christian population of the United Kingdom.

There is one more department of our administration on which I would venture to say a word to-night, I mean the question we have always with us, the question of Ireland. In all its history Ireland was never so tranquil, never so contented as she is at the present moment. What is that due to? [Cries of "Morley," and loud cheers.] You

have anticipated my answer. It is due, in the first place, to confidence in the Liberal Administration, and especially in Mr. John Morley; and secondly, to the vigilant, the just, and the sympathetic administration of Ireland conducted by that gentleman. And, on the other side, we must gratefully acknowledge the generous support of the Irish party in Parliament, who have sat day after day and night after night in supporting us on measures in which they had little or no interest, compelled sometimes to see measures in which they had an interest rejected or deferred, and yet not unwilling to take their share with us in the legislation of England, Scotland, and Wales. We had given them, and we wished to give them, a fair share of parliamentary time. They had almost all our first session; they had a part of our second session, and they would have had an important part of our third session. Well, that I am afraid will always be the case so long as you insist on keeping Irish members in London transacting British affairs, when their sole wish is to go to Dublin and transact Irish affairs. That is the Irish question. What is it that the Irish want? Is it separation? But you are told so by those who ought to know better, and who have not scrupled to stigmatise the whole of our party by the nickname of Separatists. No, it is not separation they want; they could not

if they would, and they would not if they could. There is not a Liberal in this hall who would not resist the idea of separation, and, what is more, separation would be death to Irish commerce. The interests of Irish commerce, to put things at their lowest, are a safer and a higher bond of union than the legislative Act of the beginning of the century which was forced through the corrupt Irish Parliament. But I believe that beyond and above commercial bonds, there is a surer and higher bond, both of sympathy and affection, due largely to the exertions of Mr. Gladstone; due in the next place to Mr. John Morley; and due in the last, I hope in some degree, to us, the humbler members of the Liberal party. Well, then, if it is not "separation," what is it that the Irish want? They want a local legislature for the management of those Irish affairs which they allege, and justly allege, are grossly misunderstood, grossly mismanaged, and grossly neglected at the Palace of Westminster.

We speak of their occupying a disproportionate amount of the time of the House. They do not wish to occupy one moment of our time. They only ask to be allowed to go to their own country and to their own people. When I think of their aspirations and the obstacles to them, I am irresistibly reminded of the old story in the Old

Testament, of the children of Israel who wished to leave Egypt, and of Pharaoh who would not let them go. Sometimes there were signs and portents, and then Pharaoh softened and relented ; but the king's heart, we are constantly told, hardened, and he would not let them go. But they went at last. England—not Scotland, not Wales—England alone is the Pharoah in this matter who will not let the people go. And how are we to convince this obdurate monarch? In the first place, as I think, by pointing to the patience, the respect for law, and the capacity for self-government shown by the Irish people. And in the next place, by pointing out to Pharaoh that it is for his own interests, for his own comfort, for his own convenience, and for the better regulation of his own business, that he should let them go. The Irish have already proved the first proposition, and I strongly suspect that Pharaoh is beginning to be aware of the second. He is beginning to perceive that if he continues to centralise all business at Westminster there will be no business done. What was the record of the session which has just been violently interrupted? The first Bill was a great Bill for the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales. That affected Wales alone. Then there was a Land Bill, which affected Ireland alone. There was a Crofters Bill, which affected a part, and a part only, of Scotland ; and

looming in the background there was the Disestablishment of the Church of Scotland. Well, I think England under these circumstances had a right to ask a question in popular phraseology, "Where do I come in?" There are four hundred and seventy English members of Parliament, more or less, as I believe, and they must want some legislation. As the majority of them are Tory, I do not suppose they want much, but at anyrate they must want some. You cannot expect them to do without any legislation at all, but, depend upon it, as long as things are as now, there will be little for each, and not enough for all.

You will find, as I believe, in the devolution of some of your attributes to local centres, and in the federalisation to some extent of your legislative powers, the only ultimate and certain remedy for this state of things. The fact is, as the great Sir Robert Peel is once reported to have said, this country has outgrown its institutions. It certainly has outgrown its legislative institutions. The secret of the success of this country in the past has been that its growth has coincided with the growth of its institutions. In the eighteenth century that development was arrested because, owing to the constant warfare in which we were engaged, there was little time or opportunity to devote the energies of the country to reform. In the beginning of the

nineteenth century those energies arose and sprouted again, but, as we are slowly and painfully approaching the beginning of the twentieth century, our reforming energies have begun to flag. Our wealth, our commerce, our people have increased beyond the wildest dreams of the politicians of the past; the nation appears to be becoming aware of the necessity that is incumbent upon it, and by councils, both in counties and in districts and in parishes, attempts to relieve the great mass of work which is thus thrown upon them. There is only one body which so far has remained impervious to this sensation and to these views, and that is the Houses of Parliament. Let us take the House of Commons, which has been impervious, as I think, to the reforming spirit. It has been purged of its rotten boroughs. It has been purged, as I hope and believe, of corruption; it has been purged, as I hope and believe, of aristocratic influence; but it is still cumbered with a huge mass of rules and precedents of procedure, which make it, as I believe, the slowest, the most cautious, and, at the same time, the most careless of all legislative machines.

Is it not a fact—I have never been in the House of Commons, and I have to ask some friends around me for corroboration—is it not a fact that it is a work of years, if not of a lifetime, to learn the rules of the House of Commons? Is it not a fact

that those men who enter the House of Commons fresh from their county councils and municipal work are dazed by the circumstantial delay and the opportunity for delay, and speech which often only means delay, which the House of Commons affords? I believe, then, that if you want real legislation, either Liberal or Tory, you will have to reform, and very drastically, the procedure of the House of Commons. But there is another House which offers obstacles only to Liberal legislation. What is the question of the House of Lords? Go and see for yourselves. Go to the House of Lords. There is no alarming competition for seats. On the Government side of the House you will see huddled and crowded together five hundred peers, or as many as think fit to attend, ranged in order of battle; and on the other side you will see, sparsely sprinkled on the great ocean of red benches, some miserable twenty or thirty peers. When you think that the twenty or thirty peers represent the Liberal party of the country in that Legislature, represent the Liberal party when it is in a majority in the House of Commons, as it is at the present moment; or whether it is in a powerful minority or in a great majority, as I trust and believe it will be in the coming Parliament,—that will give you cause for reflection; and when you reflect that the five hundred peers are

on the other side there to resist steadfastly and hereditarily every proposition that comes from the Liberal party, that will give you food for reflection too. Gentlemen, I believe that is the tap root of all political questions. I trust when I say that, and I believe when I say that, I speak not as a partisan but as a patriot, for I see not merely the dangers in the present, but the infinite peril of the present arrangements in the time to come. I know it is said, by some of our party even, that the House of Lords is a secondary question, because when it comes to the point it always yields to the will of the people. Is that true? I know not myself where to look for the will of the people except in its elected representatives; and if that be a reflex of the people, it certainly is not true. But then we are told it will always bow to a sufficient majority. "You do not command a sufficient majority in the House of Commons. It will always bow to a majority of one hundred." Well, that is the argument seriously used. But it is not so easy to obtain a majority of one hundred. But the argument comes to this—we are to understand that, in the opinion of these bulwarks of the Constitution, the Liberal party is only to legislate when it has a majority of a hundred, and the Conservative party may legislate safely with a majority of ten. I do not think that that represents exactly

my idea of equity. It does not represent my idea of the equipoise, the secret, and the spirit of the British Constitution. We are told that any violent demonstration of the popular will will always be obeyed by the House of Lords. But you cannot legislate by a succession of hurricanes. Say, a Government comes in with five first-class measures. There is one hurricane to support the first; is it in human nature that there should be a second, a third, a fourth, and fifth hurricane to support the remaining four?

. I say that the supporters of this branch of the Constitution are asking too much of our credulity when they support it by arguments like that. The question of the House of Lords, it is said, is a question which should not be put too much in front, because it may obscure and retard other questions of policy. They say that Irish Home Rule may be retarded by putting forward the question of the House of Lords. In my opinion, the passing of Irish Home Rule depends upon the question of the House of Lords. For, after all, the House of Lords question to my mind is not so much a measure which retards or obstructs other measures; it is a policy which should accompany and guide those measures. If you will allow me, I will illustrate what I mean by a figure. There is at this moment going on in

London one of the most remarkable mechanical experiments of the present age—the Blackwall Tunnel. You are boring a tunnel under the bed of the Thames; you are doing it by means of a great shield, which is pushed forward by some 28 or 30 hydraulic jacks. No one, I suppose, alleges or believes that the shield obscures or hinders or is an obstruction to the jacks. Every one sees that the impulse comes from the jacks, also that the working of the jacks would be useless and futile if they did not concentrate their force on the shield. I ask you to apply that metaphor to the House of Lords and to the measures which are arranged in battle order behind it, and I do not think you will be likely to complain of the obstruction of that question. Now, let me say a word as to those other questions.

We retract none of our pledges. We stand committed, as we have always stood committed, to our pledges. We have still on our banner the construction of an Irish Legislature for distinctively Irish affairs, maintaining always the Imperial supremacy and control. We stand pledged, as ever, to the Disestablishment of those two National Churches which have ceased to be national. We stand pledged, as ever, to the struggle with the liquor ring; we stand pledged, as ever, to what I see the Primrose League manifesto calls a Socialist

measure, but which I call a measure of bare and simple justice, the question of one man one vote. We do not retire from any of our pledges, but we do want in future a little air and elbow-room. We do not, I repeat, retire from any of our pledges, but we ask you to have confidence in the Liberal leaders as to when, as to how, and as to the order in which those pledges should be redeemed. There are constantly arising questions from the circumstances of the moment which are not foreseen in any programme cut and dried beforehand. I will give you one instance which appeals to you all—the unification of London. That arose from a Commission which we appointed, and I for one would not have scrupled, at any juncture, when I saw a favourable opportunity of interposing it, to lay on the table of the House of Lords or the House of Commons a measure providing for that unification in the terms of the Commission, if only to set it against any possible scheme of tenification which may be presented by her Majesty's present advisers. That is a great question. It affects five millions of people. It affects the greatest city the world has ever known, and I say the Government had a right to take that question up at any moment in its programme, and press it to a foremost place. I will take another question not less urgent, the question of

the unemployed, a question which is acute in London, Glasgow, and all the great cities in the United Kingdom. We did not scruple to interrupt the business of the House of Commons to appoint a Committee to inquire into that terrible state of things, and we should not have hesitated, had we remained in office, to interrupt the business of the House of Commons in order to ask the House to consider the recommendations of the Committee. I say, then, that, while we do not retreat from any of our pledges, we ask you, if you give us a great majority, to give us also a little air and a little liberty—to give us, if I may say so, a little perspective. But, whatever you propose, and whatever you put in the forefront of your individual programme, I trust you will consider all that as fitting into and as subservient to the policy of the party with regard to the House of Lords. This is what I come to ask you to-night—make the question of the House of Lords the prominent and the primary question. For my part, I do not attack them as individuals; I do not attack their rank or their titles; but what I do attack is the indefensible, the one-sided, the anomalous, the mediæval control that they exercise over your legislative work. But if you wish to make an effective attack on this great institution, which has survived the storms of six centuries, you must give

the Liberal party a great majority. Remember, I do not ask you to-night to return me to power, but I ask you to return the Liberal party to power, and those Ministers, some of whom I see around me, who have worked for the people of Great Britain as they never were worked for before. There is not a village in England, there is not a parish in London, that is not quick and alive with the electric spark given to it by the Parish Councils Bill. There is not a workshop in all Great Britain that does not bless to-night the name of Mr. Asquith. There is not a school throughout England and Wales, there is not a branch of education which does not regard with the deepest gratitude the beneficent administration of Mr. Acland. At the very moment when we were struck down in our career, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman had unfolded to the House of Commons the outlines of a great scheme of administrative reform of which one of the most important parts had already been passed. We have given you, besides, under the auspices of Lord Spencer, the mightiest fleet that England has had since Waterloo. After all, ladies and gentlemen, this is only a part of the achievements of this Government that the House of Commons has just dismissed. But as against that, what have the other side to set? A long rule of Tories,

fledged or unfledged, mute as regards a programme except that unauthorised one of many colours, but doomed with a dismal and disastrous negative. Gentlemen, the forces of battle are in order. I have placed the contrast, lamely and inadequately, before you; but, lame and inadequate as my presentation may be, in my heart, in my conscience, and in my intellect, I do not dare for one moment to doubt the result.

UNITY AND UNION

Anchor Society Dinner, Colston Hall
13th November 1889

YOU have drunk the health of the Liberal party. If an increase in bulk is a sign of health, the Liberal party does not want its health drunk. But I am not at all sure that I am entitled to respond for this toast. In the first place, we have always been assured that we are heretic Liberals, and that the true Liberalism resides in those superior persons who are called Dissentient Liberals. Mr. Goschen has always told us so, and Mr. Goschen is dining at the Conservative dinner this evening; and when I know that the holder of pure Liberal principles is dining at the Conservative dinner this evening, I begin to think that I ought to be there too. In the next place, I have been for some months outside of the Liberal party and of Parliament. I have quitted to some extent the chamber to which I was born, and in which I am bound to remain, for a more democratic assembly that sits in London. I have had to give

myself up to that assembly, but at the same time, even granting that I have been outside Parliament for eight or nine months, there is a proverb that says that onlookers see most of the game, and it may be interesting to you, perhaps, to hear the remarks of an impartial and unbiassed observer on the general current of politics of the present time.

The first thing that an observer would suggest to you is this—I wonder what they are talking of over the way? What are the topics with which they are cheering what the Home Secretary would call their mellow revelry? Is it foreign affairs? Is it the Tithes Bill? Is it the Sugar Convention? Is it the Land Transfer Bill? Is it the recent elections? Is it the singular example of union and concord presented at this moment at Birmingham? Gentlemen, however merry they may have sat down to discuss these topics, if they have exhausted them in any respect by this time I fear the malignant goddess dyspepsia is also hovering around. Let us take these one by one. Let us first take that of foreign affairs. I am one of those who are always anxious to avoid criticism of the conduct of foreign affairs so long as we are at peace and we have no particular reason to criticise. I am always anxious, whatever our domestic broils may be, that we should present a united front abroad, and therefore I was delighted, although a

little perplexed, when the Lord Mayor, at a banquet which he gave on the 9th of November, proposed Lord Salisbury's health with the following mysterious phrase: — "From how many sanguinary conflicts the sagacity of the noble Marquis has saved us,"—he exclaimed in pathetic accents, "who can know?" Who can know? Considering that all through Lord Salisbury's tenure of office the Powers of Europe with their enormous armies have been at complete peace, it would argue an act of folly, not incomparable with absolute insanity, for an English Minister to have attempted to plunge us into the perils and controversies of war. Therefore I think the phrase was a very far-fetched one, and it is not one on which we Liberals need reflect in any great misgivings. But I read Lord Salisbury's speech, because I hoped to find some trace in it of the sanguinary conflicts from which we were preserved, and I grieved to see the language in which he spoke of one sanguinary conflict. He spoke of the insurrection that has recently taken place on the part of the Christians in Crete. He said, "The difficulties which existed in Crete, difficulties that resembled a faction fight more than an insurrection, are, I am happy to believe, verging on a rapid termination." That was all he said of Crete. A faction fight may occur in any country. A faction fight

may come to a rapid termination, but from all that we know a faction fight could hardly come to a more sanguinary, disastrous, and horrible termination than the civil war which has recently taken place in Crete. If a Foreign Minister of this country is able to congratulate himself that a faction fight in Crete or anywhere else has terminated as that had done, he is a more complacent Foreign Minister than we Liberals wish to see.

The only foreign topic on which Lord Salisbury touched which suggests any subject of interest to us is this. He says that the main attention of his office is now fixed upon Africa, and that they have formed a great Association for carrying forward the work of civilisation in Africa. I do not know much about that Association. But it suggests an interesting reflection. We are told that a territory in Africa as large as France is to be handed over to an Association of shareholders, of which there are to be three irremovable directors appointed for life. This territory is to be handed over to these three gentlemen, and their Association is to be dealt with as may seem to them good. And the natural suggestion that arises to an impartial observer is this, that if you are able to pursue that course with regard to an enormous tract of territory in Africa, does it not seem obvious that that is the

real course of policy which you ought to pursue in regard to Ireland? If they wish to be consistent, and wish to apply equal laws to all parts of the Empire, and wish to apply twenty years or a perpetuity of resolute government to Ireland, as we believe they do, why not hand over that distressful country to a company of Unionist shareholders with three irremovable directors, the names of whom would easily suggest themselves, and the financial agent of which was speaking in this hall only last night.

The other topics do not seem to me to demand any prolonged notice. There was the Sugar Convention. The Sugar Convention was like a bubble; it was puffed into existence, and it was puffed out of it. All the arts of advertising were exhausted to introduce this interesting Convention; no soap or pills or mustard were ever more advertised than the Sugar Convention. But it vanished in a moment, Sir Thomas Farrer passed that way, and in an instant afterwards the place of the Sugar Convention was no more seen. Difficulties had arisen with foreign Powers; there was not that unanimity we could wish. The principle was sound, but we thought we had better not force it just now; and I venture to say that an epitaph of that Convention has long been engraved upon stone.

Then we come to the Tithes Bill. I have no doubt that at—what is it?—the Dolphin dinner they are discussing the Tithes Bill. Which Tithes Bill? We who gaze upon the proceedings of the House of Commons from a Chamber from which there is no access, do not exactly know what took place, but there was first one Tithes Bill and then another Tithes Bill, and finally the Speaker aided the travail of the Government by getting rid of both of them. Then there was the Land Transfer Bill. It is a strange position we are in, that at a Liberal dinner we are doing nothing but dwelling with humble adulation and imitation on the political and domestic triumphs of her Majesty's Government. That Bill was introduced in a House where there were so many Church members, of whom a large majority were Tories or their allies. Was there ever such a chance of success? But all of a sudden, when all was going well with the Bill to all appearances, there occurred one of the scenes of which we read in Oriental countries, and this most promising bantling of the Government was strangled by its friends in the presence of its own parents. I come to the last but one of the topics which I have suggested, not merely for our consideration, but for those at the Dolphin dinner—the question of elections. You will agree with me that there are

some very remarkable features about the recent elections. The first I would call to your notice is that they were preceded by an extraordinary torrent of eloquence on the part of our opponents, and almost absolute silence on our own. We had Mr. Goschen, and are having him; we had Mr. Chamberlain, not *ad nauseam*, because that is an offensive expression, but with a thorough sense of repletion; and as for Lord Hartington, he provided all the country with the diffusive gloom of a November fog. Those eminent men did not toil in vain. They were out on serious business. They were not speaking, on the face of it, for amusement; they were moved by the instinct of a higher ambition; they were determined to sow that others might reap; and the toils of these men went on amid an unbroken silence from us. They carried on an unflagging campaign, and when it was over they reckoned up their bag? What was there in their bag? They had scored four seats for us, and they kept one and lost two others for themselves. History records no instance of a nobler self-abnegation. But, what is further remarkable, they were not satisfied with having in sight political elections; they also took care to time their exertions not less to influence the municipal elections. They were so confident of success in this way that an eminent member of the party said

on the first night of the elections, when the returns must have been imperfect, that the tidings of the municipal elections would bring gladness and comfort to every Unionist home. I do not possess a Unionist home, so I do not know what it is that brings solace to the residence of those who come under that description. I will take the returns of the municipal elections from a source which cannot be suspected, and that is *The Times*:—Liberals, 122; Conservatives, 62; Liberal Unionists, 3. I cannot guess who the three were. I do not know if the trinity of remarkable Unionists I have mentioned have ever solicited municipal office, but, at anyrate, the coincidence is gratifying.

There is another point to be considered in relation to these elections. It is charged against us that they were not fought entirely on the Irish issue. I do not suppose they were fought entirely on the Irish issue. I do not care particularly that they should be fought entirely on the Irish issue. I do not see what comfort our opponents derive from the fact that they were not fought on the Irish issue. Probably the first business of the next Government will be to deal with the Irish question, but who in the world supposed that the Liberal party were bound to the Irish question and to the Irish question alone? The Irish question is, as the Americans would say, only one plank in our

platform. We ask for your votes not only on the Irish question, but as being the most faithful interpreters of the nation in matters of domestic legislation. More especially do we claim you as being the most faithful interpreters of the great masses of the population to whom we gave the suffrage in 1884. The Liberal programme is not yet complete for the next election, but I think we are much more forward in our programme than our opponents, and I think a look at the subjects from which the Liberal programme at the next election must be selected will convince you of the fact. There is the dealing with the liquor traffic. There is land reform; there is registration; the abolition of the plurality of votes which we call "One man one vote"; there is the payment of members; there is—what I will not allude to for delicate considerations to-night—the London programme, which is a separate programme; there is Disestablishment in Scotland and Wales; there is a drastic reform of the Second Chamber; there is a group of questions to which Mr. Graham so eloquently alluded to-night,—and I entirely agree with what he said about them,—which I would arrange under the head of workmen's questions, with which the party will have to deal more seriously than now, or they will find them dealt with in a separate school and in a different spirit.

I say there are these working men's questions with which the office I hold at present brings me more immediately into contact, and with which the Liberal party will have to deal, if not as its first, as its second work when it comes into office. I have not exhausted the list, nor do I claim that all here present, or I myself, are limited with all the other members of the Liberal party in the methods of dealing with these questions, or the selection or priority of these questions. But there they are, and I venture to think, if they are not a sufficient programme for our Tory friends, the Tory party must have changed considerably from what it was when I first remember them. I am not going to deal to-night with any part of the programme, because they are not parts of an after-dinner speech, nor do I say that is the programme I would put forward. I only say it is a group of questions from which the programme must be selected. But I agree with this most cordially—we shall be playing the game of a fool, the game of our opponents, if at this moment we laid down our definite programme for the next election. We are privileged to live under the full capacity of the Septennial Act. Our opponents daily tell us we shall not have a general election for three years, and I am disposed to think they are telling the truth; for they are never likely to have a better

Parliament than this, and if three years before the dissolution of Parliament we were to lay down our programme we should be playing into the hands of the enemy and not be benefiting ourselves. The proposal on the part of our enemies is all humbug, and as humbug we may take it.

But I have left out one of the topics to which I adverted as likely to form a subject for our Conservative friends to-night. There was the subject of the unity and union of our opponents as represented at Birmingham. To the impartial observer it would seem Mr. Chamberlain is endearing himself as much to his new friends as to his old. We have read the proceedings—I have no doubt you have read them in Bristol as we in London have and elsewhere, and with interest From them we gather with amazement that the real cause of trouble is not a lurking affection for Lord Randolph Churchill, but a general disinclination to Mr. Jesse Collings. What does seem to me more extraordinary than that is this. It must seem surprising to us to know that the Unionists who are prepared to lay down their lives in defence of the treaty of union that was concluded between certain persons some ninety years ago should be absolutely unable to preserve even simple amity with regard to a treaty they themselves concluded four years ago. What is the

nature of the holy compact which does not even unite its friends four years after it was concluded? The Irish treaty we know was tainted with corruption, but this treaty is above all suspicion of any sort of impurity. And, talking of the question of purity, I must turn on one side to make one remark. Mr. Chamberlain has brought a charge against the Liberal party of a very grave nature. He has impugned the purity of the Liberal party. A man who has been a Cabinet Minister twice, who has held high and confidential office under the Crown, will, I doubt not, substantiate the charge in the fullest way before he leaves the country; and when he does substantiate it, it may not be impossible for us to formulate a list of those who joined the Unionist party from motives more personal and more humble than mere disinterested affection for the welfare of the country.

That is a digression. At present I only call your attention to the scene of brotherly unity presented at Birmingham. I hope the day may come when the defenders of the Union with Ireland will set a better example. I look forward to the day when the wolf personated by Mr. Satchell Hopkins may be cordially reciprocated by the lamb of Mr. Jesse Collings; and when Mr. Chamberlain in the character of leopard may

amicably consort with the kid of Lord Randolph Churchill. At present we see nothing of this; at present we see in their deliberations nothing but a policy of hatred all round—hatred to Ireland, hatred to Mr. Gladstone, hatred to each other; and when we see that this is the result of a Tory treaty of union we begin to understand why it is that the Irish for the last ninety years have been singularly discontented. But it is not time for us to say anything of our opponents, because we are put ourselves on our defence. Mr. Goschen last night said, alluding to Mr. Morley's speech, "I believe that the making of a new Constitution for the various States which now form the United States was an easier and simpler task than to take this old Constitution to pieces." Now, I think it is well known that we should at once take a stand against that accusation. We are not taking the Constitution to pieces. I wish you, if I am not fatiguing you, to follow me for five minutes, while I dwell on this accusation so frequently brought against us, one which is so likely to impose upon the ignorant mind. I am far from supposing that the audience last night was ignorant, but one is apt to judge of the feasters by the sort of fare which is placed before them. What is the Constitution? The Constitution did not come down on tables of stone from the Mount. The Con-

stitution is an arrangement for the good of the people at large. We keep it as far as we can, as sacred as we can, because we are aware that if we once make large changes in the Constitution we may find that we have left out some other portion which requires remodelling, and find ourselves a long time before we get a perfect Constitution. What is the part of the Constitution which Mr. Goschen accuses us of pulling to pieces? Is it Magna Charta—Magna Charta which preserves every free man from unjust imprisonment? I do not think the present Government can be accusing us of pulling to pieces Magna Charta. Is it the Habeas Corpus Act? No, I do not think the Government can find fault with us in that respect. Is it the House of Lords or Commons? Well, gentlemen, we are not pulling to pieces the House of Lords or Commons. I remember in 1884, when the House of Lords rejected the Franchise Bill, that Mr. Chamberlain and other eminent Unionists spoke of the House of Lords with less respect than we could wish, and I am concerned to find that when I mention the House of Lords to a large popular audience it is not met with that respect and devotion that I could wish. But that is not our fault; it is the fault of the House of Lords. Is it the House of Commons that we are pulling to pieces? We have no chance of

pulling the House of Commons to pieces. We are not satisfied with it, but as a matter of fact we do not attack the constitution of the House of Commons. We did once propose to withdraw the Irish members from the House of Commons. We thought, considering the attitude of the House of Commons towards the Irish members, that it would not be altogether an unpopular proposal; but as a matter of fact we have withdrawn that proposal, and there is now no idea, as I believe, of withdrawing the Irish representation from the House of Commons. No, it is no part of the Constitution, no part of the essential portion of the Constitution, that we are accused of pulling to pieces. It is the treaty of union which was passed between England and Ireland ninety years ago. Let us examine for one moment, in the most practical spirit, into the sanctity of this question. If it is an integral piece or part of the Constitution, if it is a holy and sacred part of the Constitution, we should not lay rash hands upon it perhaps; but I venture to say there is hardly a statute on the statute-book which is not entitled to infinitely more reverence from every point of view than is the Irish treaty of union. I will ask you to consider one matter. We have always been charged with this, that in 1886 we brought forward a Home Rule Bill without having taken

the sense of the country upon it. That was the charge against us. I will not say whether it was founded or unfounded. I think that as the matter of rule it is better to take the sense of a country upon a great measure before it is laid before Parliament; but that cannot always be done. How does the Irish treaty of union stand in this respect? I suppose when we are reproached, and it is said to be an integral part of the Constitution, that there has been an appeal to both countries which empowered the representatives of both to arrange the treaty, even then it would only bind them and not posterity. But the Act of Union was passed in 1800. The English House of Commons was elected in 1794, and there was not a word in that general election about any treaty of union with Ireland, or which empowered its representatives to enter into any upheaval of the Constitution of Ireland. What was the case in Ireland? The elections took place in the autumn of 1793, and there was not a word in that general election of any projected Act of Union. The electors sent back their representatives without an idea that there could be such a question, or that Parliament was to be overset by a corrupt understanding in a short time.

Hear what was said at the time about the

conditions of the election of the last Irish Parliament. Not merely did it not give a mandate to its representatives, but it was elected under the harshest tyranny and closest coercion. There was no opportunity for any persons who opposed the Government to send representatives to Parliament. It was as if we had sent representatives under the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. Let me read the circumstances under which the Irish Parliament was elected which bartered away that Parliament. It was elected under torture—there is no other word for it. An Irish peer in the House of Lords, afterwards Lord Hastings, said it was elected under the most absurd as well as most disgraceful tyranny that any nation ever groaned under. One of the leading authorities on Irish history said that the election took place in solemn silence, under the influence of soldiery with an insurrection at work, the Habeas Corpus Act suspended, and the land infested by gangs of spies and herds of uniformed house-burners. I am not saying anything of the policy of Mr. Pitt with regard to the Union. There is great allowance to be made for him in his situation, and acting under the ideas of the time; but there cannot be a more preposterous contention, not even for the revolutionary politicians, who for the maintenance of the Constitution come here to

maintain that there is any sanctity about an instrument which was concluded between two Parliaments, neither of which was elected for the purpose when both were elected three or four years previously. And those who preach such doctrines to you are wilfully or ignorantly misleading. Who, gentlemen, preach these doctrines to you? Who preach to you the sanctity of the Act of Irish Union as a part of our Constitution, which it is sacrilegious to disturb? Let me see. In 1869 an Act was passed under the auspices of Mr. Gladstone, an Act which I believe to be one of justice and the best Act ever passed with regard to Ireland, an Act for the disestablishment of the Irish Church. Of that Cabinet Mr. Goschen and Lord Hartington were leading members. They were leaders in this sacrilegious attack on the Articles of Union; they pre-engaged —and I honour them for it—in the disestablishment of the Irish Church.

What says this holy and immaculate treaty of union on that subject of the Irish Church? Will you pardon me if I read the fifth article of the Treaty of Union? It runs thus:—"That it be the fifth article of Union that the Churches of England and Ireland, as now by law established, be united into one Protestant Episcopal Church, to be called the United Church of England and

Ireland; and that the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the said united Church should be and should remain in full force for ever as the same now by law established for the Church of England are,"—now, I ask your particular attention to the next few lines,—"and that the continuance and preservation of the said united Church as the Established Church of England and Ireland shall be deemed and taken to be the essential and fundamental part of the Union." Those gentlemen who were concerned, and mainly concerned, in sweeping out of the Act of Union that main and essential article, think it worth while twenty years afterwards, when perhaps the transaction might be forgotten, to come down and preach in Bristol the sanctity of the treaty of union. Gentlemen, I maintain, then, with regard to this integral part of the Constitution, that there was no authority given for either nation who were parties to the treaty to conclude that treaty. I maintain, further, that it was passed in defiance of the popular will and by corruption. I maintain, further, that it has not the authority of antiquity, even as compared with the Irish Parliament which overset it, and that the claim of antiquity for the present arrangement is futile and absurd. I maintain, further, that you cannot point to any time at which this treaty was passed that it was even accepted by

the Irish nation. And in the last place, I maintain that a very vital principle was sapped and undermined by the Irish Church Bill. This was the Act of Union which we are called traitors for attempting to disparage; that is a part of the Constitution which our dissentient friends are prepared to lay down their lives to defend, a part of the Constitution which was sown in corruption and raised in dishonour, without a single election having prefaced it by which the true feeling of the people could be ascertained — for that was only too well known already; carried by means which would invalidate the humblest statute on the statute-book, destitute of all sanction but that of open bribery, sealed with the indignation of a betrayed nationality. This is what we are to cherish and to preserve at the cost of a nation's welfare and a nation's loyalty; this is the mysterious relic which is being carried about for worship all over the country, carried by two pontiffs who themselves deprived it of its vitality and its virtue, and who, while showing it to the people as something for them to venerate, wink at each other when they think of the Irish Church Act of 1869. We will not be parties to this imposture. We endeavour rather to forget the circumstances in which the treaty of union was born than to dwell upon its merits now; and I

speak in your name as well as my own—we will seek to give to Ireland, untrammelled by any considerations of treaty, a union to its real advantage. And in that course, led by our great leader, we will persevere to an end which cannot be remote, and to a victory which will crown with reward the best wishes and aspirations of all the population of the United Kingdom.

THE CREATION OF PEERS

At Huddersfield, 28th March 1896

YOU were taunted a great deal at the last election, as I saw in the papers—because the farther a peer gets away from the region of the House of Commons and from the scene of an election, the better and safer it is for him and for the member to be returned, and therefore I only saw it, I say, from a distance — I say you were constantly taunted in the papers and in speeches with the corrupt and scandalous way in which I had recommended peerages to her Majesty the Queen. I wrote three letters to point out what an absolute falsehood and fabrication it was, but I do not think that more than one of them was published. When you enter into correspondence with an unknown individual who seeks your opinion either on some question of fact or of abstract thought, you find that he divides himself into two classes—the man who corresponds with a hostile intent, and the man who corresponds with a friendly intent. If he corresponds with a hostile intent and he gets

an answer which is too satisfactory for him, he puts that letter in his pocket, and if he corresponds with a friendly intent and he thinks the reply satisfactory, he sends it to the papers; and I am of opinion that my correspondents were not altogether of a friendly character. Now, I want to tell you, once for all—not to you few agents gathered here, but to the press whom I see gathered in front of me—I wish to tell you, once for all, exactly the truth about that scandalous imputation and that scandalous lie. I am not one of those who think that the Liberal party, because it is opposed to the present functions of the peers in the House of Lords, is necessarily to debar itself from the creation of peerages. I do not think we should be debarred from honorary distinctions in our party any more than the opposite party, that we should remove every inducement from our control, and that we should at the same time deprive ourselves of the method of rewarding supporters in a way which I trust will always continue to be honoured. Therefore, though in the abstract I had no objection to recommending the creation of peers, in the concrete I will frankly admit that I rather hoped to avoid it. I had embarked in an agitation against what I believe to be the undue power and privileges and the unfair constitution of the House of Lords,

opinions which I still hold, and which, so far as I can predict, will only leave me with life itself; but, at anyrate, I hope I may outlive the present constitution of the House of Lords.

For all that, I should have been glad, for reasons I can hardly define, if it had been possible to avoid the recommendation to her Majesty of adding peerages during my short tenure of office; but it was not possible. I received letters from Mr. Gladstone, who authorised me to use his name freely in that connection, in which he stated that just before the fall of the Government he had promised, when in office, two peerages to men of the class from whom peers are selected—men of great stake in the country, men of great wealth and high position, and one of them of great and high industrial capacity. Well, it was not till I received two, or I think three, letters from Mr. Gladstone, pointing out that the honour of the Liberal party was pledged as to those peerages, that I consented to make the recommendation. I am not saying anything in the slightest degree derogatory to those gentlemen; it was only that I had debarred myself by a silent rule, if I could possibly have adhered to that rule, not to recommend peerages to the Queen. I stated this to one of them in a letter in which I indicated the fact of their recommendation; but before doing that, and when I

knew that of course it would not be possible for me to adhere to my rule, I had stated to two other gentlemen, one a political opponent of ours, and I believe the Governor of the Cape of Good Hope, and the other the late Minister for Agriculture, who had served us well and honourably both as Minister and in a private capacity, that if it should ever devolve upon me to recommend any creation of peers their names should be included in the list. In that lies the whole history of those four names. As regards receiving one farthing of corrupt consideration for those peerages, I declare on my honour as a gentleman that it is a scandalous lie. There was no question raised, there was no question even suggested, that any of those four gentlemen gave one shilling or one farthing to the election funds, or even subscribed 5s. a year to local Liberal Associations. And what is more, I wish to say this. I was a little led into this vein of thought, this train of thought, by our excellent friend the *Manchester Guardian*, which alluded to this subject in an article yesterday. It said, "If there had been these scandalous transactions it was a matter for the Whips." There are no such scandalous transactions, and it was not a matter for the Whips, because—and this is a view which makes it simpler and stronger —I did not hear one single word on this subject

from any Whip. I had no communication with Mr. Ellis or any other Whip about it. My only communication was with Mr. Gladstone.

I discussed and deliberated this matter directly with Mr. Gladstone, and if you think that Mr. Gladstone received corrupt consideration for the recommendation of the creation of those two peerages, well, you had better go and state so before some large public audience. I do not. To make my explanation quite complete, I ought to say why it was Mr. Gladstone himself did not recommend those gentlemen. The reason is very simple. They occupied seats in the House of Commons, and he did not wish at that time to vacate those seats; therefore he had promised to make the recommendations whenever a general election or a resignation should come. Now I hope that that lie is thoroughly dead. We of this Liberal party do not traffic in titles in that way; at any-rate, when in office, if we had that disposition, we had no titles to traffic in; and therefore I come to the point that we in our ranks must make up for the deficiency of funds that we have to face by a greater energy and a greater enthusiasm than our opponents use. After all, the Liberal unit is the Liberal man. It is not Mr. Hudson, or Dr. Spence Watson, or Mr. Ellis who can organise the Liberal party throughout the country. Their

occupation and function are henceforward relative and subservient to what is the real work of organisation, which must be carried on in every village, in every parish, and in every ward of every town; and it is not until the dry bones of the constituencies in their smaller subdivisions begin to stir themselves that Dr. Watson, or Mr. Ellis, or Mr. Hudson can be of any use. Well, I think that is all I have to say to you to-day. I do not think that your spirit is likely to fail you. I have had an opportunity, at which I rejoice, of nailing one conspicuous lie to the wall. It will not stop other lies being told. We are always told that criticism is one of the gratifying incidents of public life. I do not object to criticism, but I think that it should be conducted with some regard for truth. Let us resolve that we will conduct our criticism with some regard for truth, and that we will not scatter dirt upon the eminent men who form this Government in the way in which dirt was scandalously thrown at the men who, though perhaps less eminent, formed the last.

EDUCATION, AGRICULTURE, AND FOREIGN POLICY

At Newton Abbot, Devonshire, 15th May 1896

IT is a long time since you and I, Mr. Chairman [Mr. Acland] first met. I have always been a little under your presidence, because I began as your fag at Eton, and I little thought, when I poached your eggs and made your tea, that we were destined to meet under these very dissimilar circumstances. May I allude to one other remark that you made? You said you were now an outsider. Allow me to say, sir, with all that humility which befits our former relations, that I trust you will soon be an insider. Well, it is a pleasure to come down to Devonshire, because Devonshire is one of the few districts, if it be not the only district, which stands where it did before the last election. I wish there were more Devonshires about. But if Devonshire stands where it did, we cannot say as much for the Liberal party. The Liberal party has to lie low for a while, and I am not sure that

it will be very greatly the worse for it. In prosperity, with a great majority, we are apt to wax fat and to kick, and we have an illustration of that odious proceeding in the present Government. In an Opposition such as ours we are able to cultivate the lean and spare habit of adversity; we are able to steep ourselves once more in our first principles; and we are able to cultivate, under the discipline of sorrow, that cohesion and that fellowship which we sometimes overlook in the moment of affluence. Well, but we have certainly gone very low in Parliament. As far as votes go we might almost abdicate our position there altogether. But votes are not everything, and, with a front bench in the House of Commons so strong and so able as ours is, we must always be able to exercise an influence on that body and on the country quite disproportionate to the votes we have there. The political tide ebbs and flows. It is at the ebb with us, but to-morrow it may flow again and certainly if we wish it to flow, we have the cordial assistance of her Majesty's present advisers in that object.

I was very much struck with a practical observation Mr. Acland made about the Education Bill I do not propose to speak at any great length on that Bill to-night, because, only the week before last, I had the opportunity of doing so at very

considerable length. But since that time a considerable event has taken place. The Bill has been carried by a great majority. It has passed its second reading by a majority extraordinary in more senses than one; large beyond precedent in itself, but still more significant from circumstances which have, I confess, left a deep and painful impression upon me. I will say no more of that to-night. There will be enough said about it. I would rather pass from the subject; but, however large the majority, and however it may have been composed, there is one striking circumstance connected with it. You have had many able speeches made for and against the Bill, but among the able speeches that have been made for the Bill, I might almost defy you to find one that does not contain some rooted objection to some portion of the measure. Professor Jebb made an excellent speech in its favour, but he had a strong objection to a part of it. So had Sir Edward Clarke, who, I think, represents some of you down here. So did Mr. Gray, the Conservative representative of the schoolmaster interest; so did Mr. Dillon; so did Mr. T. P. O'Connor. They all had violent objections to the Bill, although they voted for it. Mr. Chamberlain is also prepared to make very considerable sacrifice in the Bill. As for the Vice-President of the Council, I do not judge so

much from his matter as his tone; but I am inclined to believe, from the way in which he has treated the subject, that if the Bill were entirely lost, he would make no alarming sacrifice, and offer no reward for its recovery. The fact is, no one likes the Bill. For the lovers of denominational teaching in public schools it does not give enough, and for the rest of the nation it gives a great deal too much. I will give you a proof of what I said. Within twenty-four hours of the second reading of the Bill, thirty-five folio pages of amendments were put down on the paper of the House of Commons, and that is only a very small portion of the amendments that will be offered for consideration. There is another reason why people do not like this Bill. It settles nothing, but it unsettles everything; and when you begin to unsettle, where are you going to stop? There is retaliation in unsettlement, but what has been unsettled one day in one direction may be unsettled to-morrow in the next direction.

Take the question of religious instruction. That question, we hoped, was happily settled. For twenty-five years religious instruction has been given in Board schools, and given with testimonies of excellence not merely from authorities that are supposed to be impartial, but from bishops and archbishops. Now that question is dragged forth

and flung down on the table of the House of Commons. We are told we must gratify the anxiety of pious parents to have their children taught in the dogmas which they themselves believe. I do not believe these pious parents have had their children thus uninstructed during the last quarter of a century, nor if the present system was to go on for another quarter of a century they would be willing to do so. What we have to consider is not so much the pious parents who will look after their children, but the indifference of the parents who will not look after the instruction of the indifferent children. But what is coming under the 27th clause of the Bill is this. There will be a struggle of sects over the children of indifferent parents to secure them for their particular dogmatic teaching.

Another question which is unsettled by the Bill is the question of School Boards. The second clause of the Bill provides that it shall be the duty of the education authorities to supplement and not to supplant such existing organisations for educational purposes as for the time being may supply efficient instruction. That was the declaration of non-interference with School Boards, and we might have been lulled into security by the declaration, had it not been for the incautious frankness of Mr. Balfour, the First Lord of the Treasury. He said on the closing night of the debate : " I cheered,

ay, cheered a statement made earlier in the evening, and the cheer was interpreted as indicating that I should desire to see this Bill end, in the long-run, in substituting the town council management for school board management. Yes, sir, I frankly admit that is my wish." Well, there is evidently a very broad difference between duty and inclination, or duty and intention—that is, duty as expressed in the second clause of the Bill, and intention as expressed by the Government in their speeches. Now, you in Devonshire have 153 School Boards. Have they served you so badly that you are willing to give them up at the bid of Government? But yet these School Boards, from the time this Bill passes into law, if pass into law it does in its present shape, will have to fight a daily and hourly battle against overwhelming difficulties. In the first place, they would have to fight against the permanent gain to the voluntary schools in the four-shilling grant; and in the next, they will have to fight against the open avowal and permanent hostility of her Majesty's Government. Well, that is all I shall say on Board schools to-night.

I pass on to the third point, in which I think the Bill is prepared to accomplish monstrous evil. It wishes to curb the educational development of this country by stereotyping the payment made for education to what it is the month after next of the

present year. Now, I want to ask if this is a wise moment to do this thing? England is by no means in the forefront of the educational movement. She has a great leeway to make up with other countries — such as Germany and Switzerland. She finds Germany and Switzerland interfering largely with her commerce owing to the greater technical instruction of their manufacturing classes. It is at this moment that the Government steps down and says, "Thus far have ye gone, and no farther should ye go." This year we were all in a great fuss about Germany. Whether that fuss was wise or not I will not stop to inquire; but they were singing wild songs in the music-halls, and expressing those heroic sentiments which we are apt to express when we have a little lost our heads. But see what we are going to do with regard to Germany, what coals of fire we are going to heap upon what in January was supposed to be her iniquitous head. We are going to say, "We cannot declare war against you for the abominable things you did in January, but we will do a nobler thing. We see you outstrip us owing to your superior education in commercial matters, and we will stop in the race and no longer attempt to fight you, but we will stay our growing education. That is the present we make to you." Your brother, Mr. Chairman, who has achieved so

much eminence as an Education Minister, pointed out to the House of Commons the other day that the anticipated average grant for this year was 19s. 1d. per head in England and 21s. 7d. in Scotland. Therefore, when you start your grant next July, Scotland will be 2s. 6d. ahead, and with, I trust, unlimited possibility of earning a great deal more.

Then I go to the other Bill which you, sir, treated in so practical a manner—I mean the Agricultural Rating Bill. In the first place, I should like to congratulate any of those who may be present who are going to have half their rates paid under this important measure. It is true, as the Government admits, that the benefit will ultimately go to the landlord; but then, as Mr. Balfour says, you cannot benefit one class of agriculturists without benefiting all classes of agriculturists, and as far as I collect his reasoning it is this—the tenant-farmer will pay half his rate for the next few years, and that will be his benefit; then the landlord will raise his rent in proportion, and that will be the landlord's benefit; and all the time the British taxpayer—that is, the landlord, the tenant, you and me, and all of us—will be paying two millions a year to secure these proportions of benefits. That seems to me a fair division enough. The taxpayer will have his share, the landlord will have his, and the tenant-farmer will

have his, though it may be somewhat ephemeral. But there is a class which does not seem to be very particularly benefited, and that is the agricultural labourer. He has no land. Where does he come in for the benefits of this measure? Why, if he neither drinks nor smokes he has not even the pleasure of the taxpayer; and, so far as I can gather, the agricultural labourer will have neither the fleeting pleasures of the tenant-farmer nor the more solid enjoyment of the landlord, nor even the self-denying satisfaction of the taxpayer. Now, I do not deny that we all like to have half our rates paid. I will go a step farther, and will say that if there were in the centre of this country or anywhere in this country a deep, deep gold mine from the proceeds of which this financial operation might be conducted, I should be in favour of half of everybody's rates being paid. I will go farther — of everybody's rates being paid. And as long as the mine held out I should be in favour of their taxes being paid as well. But, unfortunately, there is no such gold mine in existence. If you do not pay your rates someone else must pay them for you, and, depend upon it, they will not like that operation.

I put aside the question whether it is prudent, in the present state of our expenditure, to make this grant at all; but I will take two points, and the first is this—that if the agricultural class was

the only class that needed relief as regards their rates I should say there was a great deal to be said for the proposals of the Government; but, unfortunately, the pinch is at least as great on the urban ratepayers as well. And you now are putting the urban ratepayer in this position — where he pays a tax he is to be pinched by his own rates and additionally pinched by taxation in order to pay half the rates of the tenant-farmer of this country. The fact is you cannot stop here. When once you begin to subsidise a class, other classes will also clamour to be subsidised. You don't think it is only the tenant-farmers that have a vote. Have not urban ratepayers got a vote also, and will they not, when the time comes, demand similar relief to that which you are giving to the agricultural classes? The general election comes in boroughs as well as in counties. The time of reckless promises, the time of haphazard engagement, the time of fleeting pledges never meant to be redeemed will come in five years, as it came last year, and then you will have to meet the cry of the urban ratepayer as well, possibly, as the dissatisfaction of the agricultural ratepayer.

I say this, therefore, that I see in this Bill the germ of an enormous imperial expenditure which, in my opinion, we are not wise in undertaking to meet. My second point is this: Will the agricul-

tural tenant benefit by this Bill in any sort of proportion to the sacrifices I know it entails on the imperial resources? Well, I might say, "Let the question pass, the question of principle, and let us give due relief." But it is not so. Of course it is quite true that two millions cannot be spent without benefiting somebody. You remember, in *Pickwick*, when Mr. Winkle went out shooting, those who observed his performances could not conceive where all the shot went that left his gun. They said that every bullet had its billet, but if that applied to shot, Mr. Winkle's were deprived of their natural rights. Two millions cannot be poured out of the Exchequer without somebody getting a part of it; but, putting aside the question to which you, sir, have alluded, whether the increase in expenditure does not almost invariably do away with the relief given, and does not almost invariably keep the rates at their former footing—putting that away, I do not think the tenant-farmer will get any relief in proportion to the two millions the taxpayer has to pay. Let me put this point also. If it is to be given not only to pauperised agricultural districts where agriculture is at its lowest ebb, but if it is going to be given equally where agriculture is doing well and where rents are rising, that, to my mind, is not a wise proceeding. I will give two examples to show what I mean.

As to benefit, I take two examples from one estate in the Eastern Counties. You know the Eastern Counties are not so prosperous in agriculture as you are. The first farm I will take is a farm of 379 acres, mostly arable. The rent is £336, the assessment is £302, the rates last year were £34; but this farm is assessed with the buildings included, and therefore for the purposes of this Bill you must deduct £36, the rating value for the buildings. That leaves £266, 10s. for rating purposes. The relief given by the Government will come to just under £15, and the relief to the tenant will come to just 9d. per acre. Is it worth while spending two millions out of an enormous Budget in order to give the tenant-farmer a precarious 9d. per acre? Precarious, I say, because we were told it is soon to move on from that. The next case I will take is a farm of 525 acres on the same estate, mostly arable. The rent in 1878 was £379; the rent in 1896, just fixed, is £212. The relief that the Government will give to this farm is about 6d. per acre. The relief that the farmer has got from the landlord is a reduction from £379 to £212 in eighteen years. How can anybody compare the benefit which is caused by the reduction of rent with the benefit which is to be given by the reduction under this Bill? Do these figures not clearly prove that the Government had not touched

the fringe of the subject, and that the real relief for which agriculture must look, where agriculture is pressed, is not in an extravagant assistance to rates, but in a reduction of rents? What did the Liberals do in this respect—or rather, what did they attempt to do? You know Mr. Lambert's Land Tenure Bill. I think Mr. Seale-Hayne supported the measure, Mr. Lambert went to the root of the subject, and the late Government in the House of Commons voted for the second reading of that Bill, and, if their course had not been untimely cut off, they might well have been prepared to proceed further with the Bill. But I do not think Mr. Lambert, true and tried a friend as he is of the farmer, will compare the benefit that the farmer is to receive under this Bill with the benefit he proposed to confer under his Bill. I am bound to say that this boon is dearly bought when we consider that it mortgages the income of this country for £2,000,000 a year for all time to come. I know that the Government proposes to limit the operation of the Bill to five years. Why is that done? Because in five years the election will be coming round, and it will then be reviewed and the Government will pose as the friends of the farmer. But I believe—and I will dismiss this argument in a sentence—that, though we talk of our great material prosperity, there is no subject

to which the thinking politician looks forward with more uneasiness than the state of our finances. It is satisfactory for this year, and it may be satisfactory for the next; but there is a perpetual voice raised for expenditure, and no voice, however feeble, is raised for economy. The result is, we have reached an expediture on imperial purposes alone of over £101,000,000 a year. We have in time of peace an income tax of 8d., and, whereas in the last twenty years the population has increased by 14·17 per cent. and the taxes other than income tax have grown by 16·292 per cent., the growth of expenditure has been no less than 68 per cent. It is all very well—now that you are drawing a great income, some of which is a drawing on capital, as the death duties — to say you are able to spend what money you can; but war may come even under so peaceful a Foreign Minister as Lord Salisbury; and, when the pinch comes, where are you to retrench, or where are you to raise new forms of taxation? It will be then that you will realise that, financially, you are to some extent living in a fool's paradise, and that you cannot afford to give these grants in aid unless you are certain that you will have a good *quid pro quo* for them.

Now, gentlemen, Mr. Acland asked me to say one word to you on foreign policy. I believe that

the great mass of the people of this country are supposed not to care much about foreign policy; they are supposed not to bother their heads much about such questions; they do not concern them; they deal with matters a long way off, and deal with countries which they have never seen. I venture to say that those who hold that idea are wrong. First, because foreign policy is a question of expenditure, and secondly, because it is a question of honour. But your policy and your expenditure are so closely allied that they are almost interchangeable terms, because your expenditure must depend largely upon your policy, and your policy must depend largely upon your expenditure. And it is also a question of honour. You hold your heads very high in the world. You walk Europe as if it were your quarter-deck. It does not make you beloved, but you feel that, from the records of your history, from your power, and from your prosperity, you have the right to hold your head high among the nations of the world. But if your foreign policy is weak, or feeble, or untrustworthy, it is very easy indeed to descend from being a first-rate Power to being a second-rate Power; and you would then come to find that, both in your travels and your dealings with commerce, the honour of a country is a very tangible asset. I will take two questions of foreign

policy. One is in the main a colonial question, but you can hardly, in these days, dissociate what is colonial from what is foreign. This is the question of the Transvaal. Now, there are two questions, in my opinion, in connection with the Transvaal difficulty. The first is your policy as regards the Transvaal; and the next is the inquiry that will have to be carried out in connection with recent proceedings. I am bound to say that I hold that the methods to be applied to these two questions are almost diametrically different. With regard to the policy to be pursued towards the Transvaal, I hope it will be leisurely and not hurried. Nothing can be gained, and much may be compromised, by precipitation. We have had enough of precipitation. It is not when the memory of wrong is hot within us, and when angry passions are aroused, that diplomacy can be of effect in useful work. It is when memories become dim, and when passions are allayed, that we can alone be of effect in durable and diplomatic settlements. As regards the inquiry to be held, I confess my view is exactly the reverse. In that matter it seems to me that there is no room for delay, and that promptitude is of its very essence. I think we owe the promptest, the most searching, and the most impartial inquiry, not merely to South Africa, not merely to Europe, not merely to

ourselves, but also to the persons who are accused. We owe it to South Africa to see that in this matter we mean to do impartial justice, that we mean to deal fairly as between neighbour and neighbour, and that we will not allow the national honour to be suspected and tampered with by any delay in the course of justice. In the next place, we owe that to Europe. I am sorry to say that in Europe the innocence of our intentions is often suspected, and never more than on the present occasion. Half Europe, all the press of half Europe, professes to believe that we, our Government and our people, were part and parcel in the recent raid upon the Transvaal Republic. If we show any symptoms of delaying, or shirking, or frustrating any inquiry, that belief will be strengthened beyond all opportunity of revocation. I hold, also, that we owe it to ourselves to clear up our national character to our own people, for any delay in this inquiry will be considered as suspicious by the vast mass of the population; and if once the mass of the people begin to believe that there is any reason among persons highly placed—members of Parliament or others—why this inquiry should not be allowed to proceed,—if it is believed that there is anything sinister or there is anything attempted to be kept back, a blow will be struck at public confidence deeper, far

deeper, than any company can sustain. I think that the inquiry, then, should be prompt and searching. It is not fair that those who are accused should be prejudiced by the delay in this inquiry which it is our duty to make. It is not fair to men who are far away from here, some of them fighting for their lives and for the Empire, that this inquiry, which is to search into their conduct, should be delayed beyond what it possibly must be; and that is the reason why I am not in favour of the course recommended by her Majesty's Government. Her Majesty's Government appear to me to have erred in two respects with regard to this inquiry. In the first place, they wished to postpone it until after the trial of Dr. Jameson is concluded. I can see no reason for that postponement. They need not inquire into the same set of facts. They have a great field for inquiry in the whole past action of the Chartered Company, which is not touched by the trial now pending before a court of justice. And, in the next place, I think they have erred in this—that they propose a joint parliamentary inquiry. Now, what does that mean? A parliamentary committee can only sit when Parliament is sitting. Parliament will rise in August, for we are told infallibly it will rise in August. By that time the trial of Dr. Jameson may not have been concluded, or at anyrate it may just

have been concluded, at the rate at which it is proceeding. What, then, does this mean? That, if the proposal of the Government is adopted, the inquiry must be postponed till next year, when Parliament will meet, and an inquiry so postponed will almost be worse than no inquiry at all.

Now, I want to say a word to you on another foreign subject, and that is the subject of Armenia. You may feel that Armenia is a long way off from Devonshire, and that Devonshire has not much to do with Armenia; but you are wrong. Eighteen years ago you and the people of England were welcoming home from Berlin two statesmen, one of whom, Lord Beaconsfield, the Government is never tired of telling us is dead, but the other of whom is at the head of the present Government. Why were they welcomed home in triumph? For this, largely among other reasons—that they had secured arrangements at Berlin, or it was said they had secured arrangements, by which misgovernment and oppression of Christian people would be in the future rendered impossible. One of those statesmen is the present Prime Minister. He says that the treaty—it was called the Cyprus Convention—by which we had secured the right to interfere with the Eastern people was futile. Why? Because you cannot float ships in the centre of Asia Minor. But you could not float ships in the

centre of Asia Minor when the treaty was concluded. What we have the right to ask is this: Why, under those circumstances, did he conclude the treaty; and why, at the time he was surrounded with laurels, feastings, and banquets, and was treading on green baize, did he not have the courage to say the treaty was a fraud and a sham? You and this country were parties to this treaty, and that is how you come to be interested in Armenia. Well, since the treaty was concluded, in the time of the late Government and in the time of the present Government, massacres have continually happened, not merely massacres, but horrors unutterable, unspeakable, and unimaginable to the mind of man. The late Government could not ignore those horrors, and, so far as I can gather, Lord Salisbury appears to make a charge against them. He appears to think the late Government should have taken no notice of these atrocities. If the late Government had wished, or had been able, to ignore those atrocities, I am thankful to say there is a Christian public opinion which would have compelled them to take notice of it, and if they had not taken notice of it, they would have been sent, and rightly sent, about their business.

Lord Salisbury says we should have ignored them, and then he says what we did was to exhort the Sultan. We used the weapon of exhortation

on the Sultan, but the only result of exhorting the Sultan was, unfortunately, this, that the moment they were told to behave better in this respect, the Sultan's subjects at once rushed to further massacre and outrage. We are innocent of the charge of exhortation. We did not exhort the Sultan. It was Lord Salisbury who exhorted; exhorted in the House of Lords and in the Mansion-House, and exhorted with imprecations wherever he could raise his voice; and yet he did not stop the execution of horrible outrages by the use of that weapon of exhortation. We did not exhort; we acted. He knew perfectly well that we insisted, as the first act in our drama, that an official inquiry should take place, in which we asked other Governments having consuls on the spot to associate themselves. The Sultan resisted with all the vigour of his Government, but at last he gave way. When we left office that inquiry was still proceeding. It was not in our power to take action, because we could not anticipate the result of the inquiry, which had not yet reported. That would have been prejudicing the result. But what we did do was to leave to Lord Salisbury a formidable and overwhelming weapon of the declared truth of those horrible outrages, under testimony and signature which could not be disbelieved. We left him something else besides inquiry. We discussed and

we proposed a plan to the Sultan by which these provinces would have efficient reforms, and under which it would have been impossible for these horrors to be carried on. That plan was under discussion when we left office, and that plan, with the support which was given it, we also bequeathed to Lord Salisbury. Well, then, he brings another charge against us, that we took no pains to associate the Great Powers with us in our efforts on behalf of Armenia, that we were sure to fail because we did not take the Great Powers into our confidence, and did not know what they were going to do. But we did take the Powers who had representatives on the spot into our confidence. We worked most cordially with France and Russia and with Italy; and, if we did not ask other Powers to join with us, it was because we did not think the time for that appeal had yet arrived. The time at which it would have been necessary to appeal to the Great Powers would have been when we could have gone before them with the report of the Commission of Inquiry in our hands, and said, as co-signatories of the Treaty of Berlin, You and we and all of us are partly responsible for the government of this country; what are you and what are we going to do in the face of the horrors perpetrated? But Lord Salisbury may be answered by himself in his own despatches of 24th July and

7th August. Just after coming into office he states and proclaims the excellence of the relations with the Powers with whom we were associated in this good work; and when he spoke later, with the responsibility of power for three or four months, he never paused in telling us—or at least he told us on one very memorable occasion—that the agreement with the Great Powers in this matter was absolutely complete. Not merely did we leave good relations behind us with the Great Powers in this matter; we left excellent relations with our successors themselves, because Lord Salisbury, within a month of coming into power, sent for the Turkish Ambassador and said that he supported entirely the policy which the present Government had inherited from their predecessors in office. These are terms which, it seems to me, are even more than is required by mere continuity of policy, and it is surely strange for Lord Salisbury at this time of day to come forward, as he did on the auspicious occasion of the Primrose Anniversary founded to commemorate the triumphs of the plenipotentiaries at Berlin, and gravely criticise his predecessors. Now, I think I have shown you, and I have not nearly exhausted the field, that there is ample material for criticism in the conduct of the present Government; but, for all that, let me tell you frankly that you have a stiff task before you.

You have to fight three giants—three enemies as one. You have, in the first place, to fight the present Government, a giant with feet of clay you may think, but a giant at anyrate which exercises an almost unlimited power, with which it was entrusted by the country at the last election. But you have, in the next place, to fight not merely the Government, but the people who returned them to power. For some time after a general election such as the last, those who voted Tory—nay, those who had abstained from voting Liberal or voting at all—will feel that they are in some degree responsible for the acts of the present Government. In my opinion they rightly feel that responsibility, because they are responsible; but as time goes on and their contentment oozes away, that feeling of responsibility they will allow to pass from them. They will not be so anxious to associate themselves with the Government that they elected, and that enemy, if the Administration goes on as it is going on now, will become weaker and weaker throughout the country. Then you have a third enemy to fight against, and I am not sure that that is not the most formidable of all. You have got to fight the apathy of the country. It was from the apathy of the country that the last general election brought its chief results. I do not know whether it is a healthy sign or not—I am

not at all sure that it is an unhealthy sign—but, at anyrate, I believe that the amusements and the pleasures of life bulk far more largely in the attention of the population at this moment than any political question that you can suggest. I daresay everybody here, below a certain age, feels a little guilty when I make that remark. What is the first column to which they turn in the newspapers? Is it always the political column? Is it not sometimes the column recording the triumphs of golf, or the feats of the bicycle, or the score of the cricketer, or of the footballer, or even more questionable sports still? For my part, I am happy and contented to think that the population of this country is happy and contented, but I do not think they will remain happy and contented long if things go on as they are going at present. I think, therefore, that that great enemy of apathy, the most formidable with which you have to contend, will lose and diminish in strength as time goes on. But I will give you one consolation. The very strength and variety of the component parts of which this Government is composed is certain in a very short time to lead to the strength and variety of reaction against them. There are some, we may suppose, who voted for the present Government because Mr. Balfour was a bimetallist; some, we may suppose, voted for it because under

Lord Salisbury there would not be a ripple to disturb foreign affairs; some voted, perhaps, because Mr. Chamberlain, as he told us in his last speech, is a Liberal and a democrat; some, perhaps, for the Duke of Devonshire, because, we may presume, he is a Liberal and not a democrat; some because Mr. Ritchie had produced that creation so dear to the Conservative heart—the London County Council; some because Mr. Goschen was the skeleton at the feast; and I have no doubt that many other sections of the population placed hopes with which I cannot at this moment charge my memory on the thirteen other estimable gentlemen who comprise the present Cabinet. Hope disappointed, with however much of charity it may be mixed, spells reaction; and I am inclined to think that all these great men will in the various achievements I have detailed be apt to disappoint their followers, and produce that feeling against the Government which must be the first day-spring of the Liberal reaction.

Someone has defined the secret of success to be that you should wish every morning for the same thing you wished for the previous evening — that is to say, that persistency and a single mind spell success in human endeavour. I do not doubt for one moment that if the Liberal party in this country make up their minds that they want a

Liberal Government, a strong Liberal Government,—because a Liberal Government that is not strong is of comparatively little use to you,—if you feel that Liberalism is worth fighting for, a Liberal Government you will get. But you will not get it by passing occasional criticism on the conduct of the Government, or by giving an occasional languid vote. If you wish to achieve that result it will be by all the energy you possess, all the persistency of which you are capable, and all the organisation that you can compass. I know in this country how many there are who care for no party in particular, how many there are who are sick of party, and sick of party warfare and party methods. I do not blame them. I have even sympathised with them in public, and if they will show me a better method or a more excellent way than party method I will readily adopt it. But all the endeavours to dispense with party in England have proved unavailing and absolute failures for this simple reason, that the party system is rooted deep, deep down in our habits and our history. Well, I know how many there are, I say, who are sick of party, and I do not ask them to change their view. I do not even ask you to think that Liberalism, and all the Liberals do, is good. In a vast party, which counts its representatives by hundreds of thousands of voters,

there must always be light and shade, variety of action and variety of opinion ; but what I do claim for the Liberal party is this, that it does honestly try to embody and represent what is wanted by the party of some progress in this country. I, at anyrate, confidently invite a comparison between the suffering Liberalism which we represent and that lay Liberalism in high places which seems to have deserted the original idea so completely that the Liberal lamb in the ecstasy of political concord finds itself inside the Tory lion. You must judge between us and them, not by our words, not by our professions, but by our acts. If the constituents see in the present Government the embodiment of universal peace, of equal justice to all classes, of wise economy and beneficent social reform, they will keep that Government in, and I shall not blame them for it; but if they see, not this, but the reverse,—if they see constant foreign and colonial complications, if they see reckless and increasing expenditure, if they see legislation, not in the interests of the nation as a whole, but of particular classes and creeds,—if, in a word, the nation begins to realise it has been fooled, their great majority will melt away like snow in a thaw, and glad and proud shall I be, and so, I hope, will you be, if it should be the sun of Devonshire that shall set that thaw in motion.

MUSCLE AND BRAIN

On Opening a Free Library at Shepherd's Bush
June 25, 1896

I THINK those who watch the growth of the free libraries system in this country, in spite of the almost persistent opposition of the ratepayers, have some cause to inquire, What object is it that these free libraries answer in our modern commonwealth? I confess I have formed a very clear conviction on that head. I think no one can watch the progress of our nation without seeing the enormous predominance that is given everywhere to-day to outdoor sports. I welcome that tendency. I think it is a healthy and rational tendency, but of course it may be carried too far. What we do see in the tendency to outdoor sport at this time is, that it weans the race from occupations that might be objectionable, and it is rearing a noble and muscular set of human beings; and it subserves other objects which are not so immediately apparent. For instance, I take it the connection between Australia and the mother

country has been rendered closer than it would have been otherwise by the cricket contests which take place between the two countries; and I am given to understand, though I have never seen one of the great northern or midland football matches, that they are almost Homeric in their character, in their strenuousness, and the excitement they engender. The rivalry they engender between the various districts of the country furnishes a subject healthy in itself and inspiring to all those who witness it. I hope very soon to see some such match, because I think we have lived in vain if we have not seen one. I have seen the crowds going to those matches, and I have never seen anything in public life or elsewhere comparable to the eagerness and the enthusiasm of those crowds. Then there is bicycling. I suppose nobody, not even the humblest pedestrian, with his arm broken or otherwise, is indifferent to the bicyclist. I do not know what particular effect the bicycle may have upon the conformation of posterity. It seems to me it may produce a race of beings of a Z-like shape. But, at anyrate, it has produced a race of hardy adventurers such as those by whom our Empire was founded—adventurers perhaps a trifle too hardy, but who would have had no opportunity of visiting the corners of our native land if they had not been furnished with these useful wheels.

All that is a most interesting and striking feature of our national life. We have to maintain a great empire. We have to develop a great empire, and for imperial purposes you need a race of muscle, of strength, and of nerve. All these are developed by these sports. But, after all, this is not everything. An empire cannot live by muscles alone. It must have brains. I suppose I shall be told at once that the brains are furnished by our educational appliances. I do not wish to undervalue our schools, either primary or secondary, or the work that the universities have done inside or outside their limits. So large is my admiration that I do not wish even to disparage the efforts of Governments in the cause of education.

But even education will not give you all that you want. What you want to develop in your race is the art of thinking, and thinking is an art which stands a very good chance of perishing from amongst us altogether. The risks to which independent thinking is exposed, when you come to reckon them up, are manifold and dangerous. I think the press, with all its great merits, is one of the greatest enemies of independent thinking. To begin with, we are furnished every day from at least half a dozen quarters with the best thoughts of trained and able minds on the subject of the day in the daily papers. It is all that one able-bodied

man can do to get through these able-bodied papers in the course of the day. Even if he feels inclined to think, and to correct the excellent thoughts which are thus supplied to him at a merely nominal figure by his own independent exercise of brain, he has not time to do it, and he becomes satisfied to become the walking reflex of the paper to which he happens to subscribe, or, what is more unfortunate still, of the many papers to which he subscribes, which may produce a confused habit of brain. Not merely have we that, but, if the appetite is sufficiently omnivorous, he has the weekly press in profusion, with the more leisurely thoughts of distinguished minds, and if he has a minute or two left, he can read all the monthly magazines and complete the cycle of his intellectual system. But all this is bad for independent thought. We are grateful to those who supply those thoughts to us; but they ought not, in a properly constituted community, to supersede the thinking for ourselves. I am afraid that independent thinking is to some extent dying out among us. We have great waves of thought which do not so much arise in the community itself as among those who guide the community, and therefore, partly also, perhaps, from the quick succession of impressions that take place from the intercommunication of all parts of the world, the

mind of England, which perhaps is the most receptive mind of the world, is becoming deadened and apathetic to external impressions. Now, I put one simple test to you. Take that melancholy shipwreck the other day. If you are asked about that shipwreck in a fortnight you will say, "Surely it did not take place so recently as that; it must have taken place three months ago." Why is that? Because of the great number of impressions by which it has been constantly overlaid, and this great variety of impressions constantly stamped on the more or less receptive material of the brain gradually deadens impression and creates apathy, and I believe intellectual apathy is the great danger of our nation at this time.

That is the text from which I have to preach. I believe that this great work of public libraries is a great counter-irritant to that intellectual apathy; I believe it furnishes an inducement to those who wish not merely to improve their bodies but their minds, who wish not merely to play but to think, who wish to have an opportunity of retirement from the first-hand impressions of the world and to form their impressions for themselves, to come to some temple of reading and of thought where they can form their conclusions and their convictions. Now, of course, it is a great deal to furnish the books and to furnish the house, but even that is

not everything. I suspect that many people would say, on hearing that a free public library has been formed, "Oh, it will furnish nothing but a sort of gratuitous circulating library of all the sensational novels that come out." Well, a man had much better read a sensational novel than read nothing; but I do not believe that is the experience of free public libraries. I do not believe they have simply furnished fiction to those for whom they cater. I believe the experience is that a fair proportion of thoughtful books are taken and digested, and pre-eminently I believe by the artisan class. But even then there is a difficulty. You take your man or woman or child, thirsting for knowledge, to those shelves. He longs to read something which will help him, and he does not know what he is to read, or how he is to get at the right book to read. Now, of course, many great geniuses have been formed or guided, as they have told us, by being left in a library quite free, and allowed to read whatever their mind guided them to, but I do not believe that to be a wholesome case at all. The number of books has increased so enormously, the titles, if I may say so, are sometimes so misleading, that a student who is thrown into a library under unrestricted conditions is apt to be very much like that confectioner's apprentice—I do not know whether he really exists or whether he is legendary

—who, on his first employment in a confectioner's shop, is always allowed to eat as much as he chooses, in the sure confidence of his master that he will eat so much, and procure for himself so disagreeable an illness, that he will never wish to partake again. Well, I think that is the danger of the student who wanders into these libraries without any guide whatever to help him.

That brings me to my last point. I think every free public library requires a taster in the shape of a librarian—that is to say, a man who not only knows the outsides and the titles of books, but a man who knows the insides. They require a taster to guide the student as to what he wants. I do not know whether you have a taster in your librarian to-day, because I have only just made his acquaintance, but I do not doubt that you have. But it is a real and inestimable faculty. I believe that a tea-taster—a man who is endowed with the peculiar faculty of tasting tea and discriminating between the coarser and the finer kinds of tea—has a fortune in his palate; I believe that a man who can discriminate between the various kinds of silk by touch has a fortune in his fingers; but I am sure that neither of these is so valuable to the intellectual life of the nation as the taster who will guide the student to the books the student wants.

Well, I will not detain you any longer to-day. I

hope that in these somewhat desultory remarks I have given the audience who have done me the honour to come here to-day some hope and some foundation for hope in the future of this library. It is itself a proof of the public spirit which has been awakened of late years in the inhabitants of London, and I trust with all my heart that it may not be the last of the proofs of that public spirit, nor especially of the proofs of the public spirit of that great benefactor [Mr. Passmore Edwards] to whom it is my pleasure to move a vote of thanks to-day.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION

On Opening a Technical Institute at Epsom
July 24, 1896

IT gives me great pleasure to come here to-day and open this Institute. It has given me pleasure in more senses than one. In the first place, I have become acquainted internally with the very graceful building which has now for some time adorned Epsom, and which does so much credit to the architect, Mr. Hatchard Smith. And in the next place, I am not quite sure that we in Epsom meet quite often enough, so that I welcome an opportunity like this of cordial co-operation for an object of public interest. Epsom suffers, of course, through being overshadowed and engulfed to some extent in the great metropolis. But we do not wish to sink into being a mere item in the metropolitan police area; and though we do not endeavour to compete with our larger neighbour in the sense in which a Scotch minister of the Cumbraes used to pray for the Isles of Cumbrae and the adjacent isles of Great Britain and Ireland, yet at the same time we desire to

remain a community and not an item. This is not, strictly speaking, the opening day of our Institute —except in the most agreeable sense of the term. The building, as I understand, has long been open for use, but we determined that we would not open it formally until we were free of debt.

Now, one of the most startling features of the amazing age in which we live is the different code of morality which obtains with regard to public enterprise and private individuals. Private individuals, if they fall into debt, are no longer put into prison, except they are fraudulent debtors, but they are visited to some extent with the moral censure of the community, though probably nobody can say that they have passed through their lives without being in that condition of wrath. But with regard to public enterprise, the facts are very different. I suppose there are none of us who do not pass a day without receiving some agonising appeal from some struggling promoter of a good cause, who has laid out £1000 in a building with only £100 to meet it with. And the result is that, in the case which I am instancing, a debt of £900, which he would have been reprimanded for incurring as an individual, is regarded as meritorious when incurred as the representative of a "cause." I am not sure that even the ecclesiastical enterprises are free from a reproach of that nature.

Our clergy throw themselves boldly into the ocean, and trust to the benevolence of individuals to pull them out of that discreditable position. But that is not our position to-day. Our debt was not incurred with our eyes open; there were incidentals, necessary expenses, and so forth. But we did not rush boldly and brazenly into debt, knowing that we had no assets with which to meet that debt; and here we are at last to-day, clear of debt, and our Chancellor of the Exchequer has communicated to us a surplus, smaller, indeed, than that which the late Government left its successors, but adequate for the purpose, and, I trust, not so soon nor so rapidly to be spent. This is an informal gathering of friends and neighbours rather than an occasion on which a Minister—and I am not a Minister—gives a long account or a long disquisition on technical education. As I have to catch an early train, I will only say half a dozen words on the subject of technical education at large. In the first place, even if we were not exposed to foreign competition, the gradual decay of the apprenticeship system would necessitate in all our smaller towns, and, of course, in all our larger towns, some means whereby a man might be able to become a skilled artisan in his trade, and so obtain that capital which skill represents to the man who possesses it. But our present position

is not one of being free from competition. Year after year our consuls and our various officials of the Board of Trade have called the attention of the community to the fact that we are no longer, as we once were, undisputed mistress of the world of commerce, but that we are threatened by one very formidable rival at anyrate, who, as I dare say Mr. Aston could tell you from his City experience, is encroaching on us as the sea encroaches on weak parts of the coast—I mean Germany.

A little book has been lately published called *Made in Germany*, to which I think your attention ought to be called; but if that be too long to read, there is an abstract of the arguments of the book in the last number of the *Review of Reviews* which I do think is well worth the attention of everybody who is interested in the prosperity of the country of which his prosperity is a part. The figures with regard to Germany are very simple. The heads of the indictment against ourselves are three. First, that the proportion per head of exported British produce is £8 1s. in 1872, whilst it had sunk to £5, 11s. 3d. in 1894. Of course, you may say that reduced prices account for some part of that, but I do not think you will find that decreased prices do account for it, when you observe the broad features of the balance of trade and also of the German increase of trade.

Secondly, the imports of German manufactured goods into Great Britain rose from £16,630,000 in 1883 to £21,630,000 in 1893, an increase of thirty per cent. in ten years of manufactured goods into the country which believed it had almost a monopoly of supplying the world with manufactured goods. The total imports into Great Britain declined in value £22,000,000 between 1883 and 1893 in gross, but the imports of manufactured articles increased by over £13,000,000. I think these are grave and striking facts, and it is not, perhaps, a time to inquire into the causes as regards Great Britain herself, but as regards Germany the causes are not far to seek. The fact is that for the last sixty, seventy, or eighty years she has fitted herself by the most perfect system of technical education in the world, except, perhaps, the Swiss system, to be a great industrial nation. She has been slow, she has been patient, she has been laborious, she has sent clerks and agents over here who have taken what secrets we had to afford, and have improved on them when they returned to Germany; and the result is that, though we have not lost our position, she is slowly—and not very slowly after all—creeping up to us. In some of our colonies, in India, and in Egypt, which is under our tutelage for the present, German trade has gravely menaced British trade.

I do not suppose that in Epsom we are prepared to combat single-handed so grave a condition of affairs, but we can, at anyrate, examine the condition as regards the nation at large. We can see what has led to Germany's success, and we may, perhaps, inquire of ourselves whether there have not been internal causes among ourselves—a certain lethargy, a certain indifference, a certain haughty feeling of superiority—which has led to our decline. And after all, gentlemen, all movements in this country come from the bottom. We have to form an educated public opinion in order to give an impulsion to Governments, and I believe that is more likely to be performed by the study of the facts and the figures with regard to British trade and with regard to German trade, and also by studying in these smaller technical institutes what can be done to remedy it, than by any parliamentary action that is likely to take place. But, at anyrate, we have a right to ask this. There are committees and commissions of inquiry without end. Some are indefinitely postponed, but some are pressing and immediate. Surely an inquiry might well be instituted, which might be short, which might be practical, and which might be exhaustive, into the causes of the decline of British trade and the alarming increase of our foreign rivals. We shall, I believe, find

this as the summary: Ever since the conquest by Germany of Austria she has silently and quietly fitted herself for two great wars. One of them she has accomplished. The war she has accomplished was the great war for the consolidation of Germany. The war which she is accomplishing, and which, in my opinion, is the only meritorious war in which any nation can engage, except under pressure of necessity, is an industrial war. And in that I think and fear, though with the heartiest wishes for her welfare, that, unless we take precautions in time, she is not unlikely to succeed also. I have great pleasure in declaring this Institute open.

RESIGNING LEADERSHIP

Delivered in the Empire Palace Theatre, Edinburgh, 9th October 1896

MR. CHAIRMAN, Ladies and Gentlemen,—You have always been kind to me in Edinburgh, and you have never been kinder than you are to-night. I stand before you, as you know, in a somewhat strange, perhaps in a somewhat isolated, position. It will not be necessary for me at this period to call attention to the circumstances to which you, sir, have adverted. Later on I will say a word on them. But my first object must be to deal with one subject of policy on which I feel I am pleading for the interests of my country, and of my party as included in my countrymen—an interest which you cannot sacrifice to any personal ambition, or even to any personal convenience, and upon which, as you, sir, have reminded us, we have been obliged to make a final stand; but I have received many letters suggesting that to-night I should treat of various policies which, I suppose, I should bequeath as some sort of legacy to the Liberal

party. I have no intention of doing anything of the kind. In the first place, in my present position, a declaration of policy from me would be an individual declaration, and would have no importance. In the next place, I do not believe, if I may say so, that the time has yet come for the Liberal party to make a substantive declaration of the policy on which they may have to appeal to the country. I hope, whatever course the Liberal party may take, they will not adopt that fatal course of breaking up into all sorts of variegated policies long before the general election at which those policies are to be decided. And thirdly, I will not speak to you about domestic policy to-night, because, in the last five weeks, there has come a question before the country which, like a torrent, has swept everything before it.

I need not mention it to you. You, I daresay, have taken part in some of the innumerable meetings that have been held all over England with regard to it. Now, gentlemen, I do not for one moment deprecate those meetings. I am one of those who welcome those meetings. I welcome them for three reasons. In the first place, I welcome them because they show that the spirit of our country is not dead, but dormant. Some of us had begun to fear, from the apathy that prevails on many subjects, that we had grown soft and tepid

in our prosperity, and that the nation was suffering from fatty degeneration of the heart. That idea, at anyrate, is dispelled by this agitation, and even though I cannot go the full length with it, I rejoice in the spirit which it is proving. Secondly, I welcome them because I think that they tend to convince foreign Governments—and they require a deal of conviction on this subject—of the unselfishness and integrity of our policy in this matter. In the third place, I welcome them because they strengthen the hands of her Majesty's Government in dealing with this question.

Now, sir, that may seem a strange declaration from one who was till yesterday, not the leader of her Majesty's Government, but the leader of her Majesty's Opposition. But in foreign politics I have never known party, and, even if I had known party in connection with foreign politics, in this grave crisis of our national relations I should have deemed it my duty to give what strength my feeble voice or vote could give to her Majesty's Government in dealing with this matter. As regards that uprising, it seems to me that the enthusiasm of the country needs more guidance than stimulus. It has been stimulated enough, and what it needs at this moment is rather guidance and direction. I think it needs guidance, because we cannot allow the whole foreign policy

of this country—indirectly it may be, but still in effect—to be guided entirely by the Sultan and the acts of the ruffianly Kurds. The policy of this country consists, if you like it, of a thousand portions or a thousand interests, and we cannot allow nine hundred and ninety-nine of these portions or interests to be sacrificed to the remaining one, however important that one may be. This agitation is often compared to that which was carried on by Mr. Gladstone in 1876 with regard to the massacres in Bulgaria. But allow me to point out that there are two essential differences between that agitation and this. In the first place, on that occasion we had Russia and her armies behind us in the cause which we were advocating; and now, as far as our last news goes—it is not very recent, but as far as our last news goes—we have Russia and her armies not behind us, but against us in this matter. I know that that is denied by some enthusiasts who think that that exists which they wish to exist, but as a matter of fact the declarations of Russia on the point are absolutely conclusive to those who know the use of diplomatic language. But what does diplomatic language matter? Deeds are more valuable than diplomatic language, and though those writers profess to be supporting Lord Salisbury in his policy, they remove, by denying

the fact of Russian opposition, the one ground of excuse and apology on which Lord Salisbury rested his inaction after his speeches of last year. Well, I say that though it may seem a trivial matter to those who reason about foreign politics in their study, it is a difference of very considerable importance that in this agitation we have Russia against us and in the former agitation we had Russia for us. Then there is another important difference. The agitation of 1876 was directed against the then Government, which we believed was thwarting the wishes of the nation. We were right in that belief. We fought the Government tooth and nail, and we won. But on this occasion, as far as we know, the Government are animated by the same wishes and the same resolution as ourselves. To doubt that would be to doubt their humanity, to doubt that would be to doubt their common sense, because the poorest and humblest motives of self-preservation and of expediency could not but fall in line with the declarations of the British people with reference to those horrors that have existed in the East. The question raised by these massacres, however, is much larger, I think, than is usually supposed.

I do not wish to discuss the question in a partisan spirit, but in a patriotic spirit to-night. Were I to discuss it in a partisan spirit I might point out

that the source of all our difficulties lies in the policy that was pursued some eighteen years ago. My purpose to-night, however, is not historical, but practical. I do not care how the evil has arisen; to-night what we have to consider is how it is to be met. Now let us clear the ground. There is no need to discuss these massacres. There is no need to express our horror of them. As to that we are all agreed. From the Government that reigns in Downing Street to the beggar that asks your alms in the road, every class and creed and category of our fellow-countrymen are agreed on this point. But there is a difference in the indignation, because there is a difference in the information. Not all, I think, have read, as I have read, the consular reports that came in when I was in office. I say that, though they have been produced, I do not think those passages were capable of being printed in which horrors were described in detail so shocking, not merely that I could not read to the end of the page, not merely that they seemed to surpass all that I had ever read of ferocity and cruelty, but that they seemed to transcend the imagination of very fiends to have devised. I say, then, that we who have been behind the scenes must, if possible—if there can be a comparison in the detestation which all must feel—have felt to a greater amount and extent

than those who have only obtained knowledge from popular sources of information. It is better also to differentiate those matters, because they have an important bearing on the question as it is before us. The first massacres, and all the massacres up to only quite recently, were carried on in remote districts, and inaccessible, or difficult, at anyrate, to communicate with, and therefore it was easy in those cases for those people or those Powers who very naturally did not wish to believe in them, because they were afraid that by them the Eastern Question would be raised—it was very easy for those persons and those Powers to deny the facts of these massacres; but the case was changed when they took place in Constantinople, in what was once the capital of Eastern Christianity, and which, I pray, may yet be the capital of Eastern Christianity—when, in what was once the capital of Eastern Christianity, murderous mobs were brought forth, armed and inspired from imperial sources and the Commander of the Faithful himself, to massacre and beat down these wretched Armenians, that formed part of the population of Constantinople, till the centre and flower of the East, as Constantinople may without hyperbole be called, ran down with the blood of his victims, shed coolly and ruthlessly by these assassins. What is the change? How

does it matter whether a man's throat is cut on a mountain side in Asia Minor or in the street in Constantinople? It matters in this way, that these horrors were committed under the eyes of Ambassadors of the Great Powers, who have professed to doubt their authenticity; under the eyes of the Embassies and the Secretaries of Embassies and the Dragomans, and the whole diplomatic apparatus of Europe lodged in Constantinople; and therefore you arrive at this as the result of these massacres, that it is not possible for any Power whatever to deny or to blind itself or to wink at the fact of the massacres, and they pass from isolated and local atrocities in various parts of Asia Minor to constitute a question not of isolated massacre, but of the general misgovernment and methods by which Mohammedan and Christian alike are oppressed throughout the length and breadth of that Empire.

Before you deal with a problem, gentlemen, the great thing is to understand what that problem is. That is why I have dwelt on the character of these massacres. The question with which you are dealing in your public meetings of sympathy, and will soon deal with at your political meetings, is not the question of tens of thousands of Armenians cut down in cold blood. It is the whole question of the future government of one of

the fairest regions of the earth, that has all along been oppressed and misruled by the unspeakable Government of the Turkish Sultan. That is the question before you; that is what is called the Eastern Question. That is a question so large, from the jealousies of the Powers concerned, and from its immensity, that it is a question that has long been the bugbear of all Europe. That is the Eastern Question with which you are face to face; that is the question, no less, no slighter, with which you are called upon to deal. Well, gentlemen, if that is the question, it shows at once that partial remedies will not do very much good towards solving it; that some partial remedies, indeed, might do harm; and that all remedies which are merely partial and temporary in their nature will not deal with the root of the evil itself, but will simply patch up, for the moment, that question which is sure to recur.

Now, let me discuss some of the remedies, so far as I have been able to gather them, which have been proposed by responsible politicians—and some who are not particularly responsible. I think I may be able to point out that some of these remedies are futile, and some are dangerous, and that some combine the characteristics of both adjectives. But, whether they are futile or dangerous or not, I fully recognise the good

intention with which they have been brought forward. It is only, I think, my duty, as it is the duty of every one of us, to weigh them carefully, to ponder them carefully, before we urge them on the executive Government of this country. Now, the first and most obvious remedy that is proposed is the deposition of the Sultan. That is obviously a remedy that occurs to all of us. It has one excellent feature, at anyrate, which is that you might possibly get a better Sultan and you could not possibly get a worse. But I am afraid that even that remedy would prove illusory. In the first place, it would only scotch the question, if I have accurately stated that question; it would not deal with it thoroughly. It is not a man that you have to deal with, it is with a method, and therefore, the removal of one man, however bad and cruel and cowardly he may be, would not in reality apply a remedy to the evil. Then the next point is this, How are you to depose the Sultan? I have not seen any answer to that question. You cannot depose the Sultan alone, because that would be the very isolated action which the Powers of Europe would oppose. You must, then, get the concert of Europe to assist in deposing the Sultan; and I venture to say this, that if you can once get the concert of Europe into life for such a purpose as that, you had much

better call on it to deal with the much larger issue involved. Then there are other methods and policies of indirect pressure to which I think my friend and colleague, Mr. Bryce, has alluded in one of his speeches, and to which I myself alluded last year. Now, let me say to you of these measures, that if you mention them you thwart them. When you tell a man exactly what it is that you are going to do in case he does not take a particular line, you give that man the very means and opportunity that he wants, to prevent your carrying out your policy. Therefore, the indirect means and policies to which Mr. Bryce and I have alluded are means and policies which it would be useless to discuss in a public speech, and therefore I cannot allude to them here. But what I will say is this, that though I thought them possible last year, when my information as a Minister was comparatively recent, I cannot on my responsibility say that in the present state of circumstances they are practicable and possible, because I do not doubt, or at least I think it extremely probable, that the situation has hardened and crystallised as against British policy since then.

Well, then, there is another remedy by which we are to put pressure on the Sultan. We are to withhold the Cyprus tribute. Now, that sounds very efficacious at first, but it is one of the remarks,

and not by any means the only one, which convinces me that some of our instructors are not so deeply and thoroughly informed on this question as they ought to have been before they took up their parable. We pay no Cyprus tribute to the Sultan, and therefore it is impossible to withhold it even if that were the efficient course. What we do is this. We first take what is necessary for the administration of the island, fixed at a certain rate, and the remainder is paid to the creditors under certain loans to the Sultan's Government, and as a sinking fund for the redemption of those loans. Well, then, the proposal is, I presume, that we should keep back the payment from the creditors in order to put pressure on the Sultan. You may as well tickle a tortoise's back to make it laugh. I remember that in the Courts of our earlier kings those princes when they were of tender years had an indispensable household officer about them who was called the whipping-boy. That was to say, that when his little Majesty or his little Royal Highness was naughty, as it was indecorous that coercion should be applied to himself, it was usual to whip the whipping-boy. I have always doubted if that had much effect on the little prince, but I am quite certain that if you attempt to put pressure on the Sultan by making the Sultan's creditors your whipping-boy, that will

cause less than no effect at all upon his Majesty's mind.

Well, then, there is another policy, which consists, so far as I can understand it, simply and broadly in handing over to Russia either the Dardanelles or the administration of the Turkish Empire. Well, I have only one primary observation to make as to this proposal, which is that neither is the passage of the Dardanelles under our control, nor does the Turkish Empire belong to us. It is not an unfavoured form of policy in certain circles to give over to others what does not belong to them. And, so far as I know, it is not one that is easy of practice in the present government of Europe. Therefore I am inclined to think it would not be efficacious on the present occasion. Then there is only one objection I venture to mention. The late Government was extremely anxious to arrive at an understanding with Russia. We settled the anxious Pamir question with Russia, and we were prepared to go great lengths in reconciling Russian and English policy in the East, and I desire to speak with every wish and every hopefulness about the possibilities of establishing a working understanding with Russia. We were asked to hand over large districts to Russian administration; and I wish to make one remark, which is rather in the nature of a reminder than an observation of my

own. I never care myself to criticise the internal government of other civilised countries. That is their affair and not mine, and I am, in the long-run, of opinion that every civilised nation gets the government for which it is suited, and which it likes best. But it has not always been the fashion of Englishmen to approve of Russian administrative methods to the extent of handing over all parts of the world to the same authority. There was a time, not so long ago—because the mind of the country moves somewhat quickly—there was a time when we deprecated Russian administrative methods towards the Poles and towards the Jews and towards some dissenters. Now, I do not wish to criticise those methods because I say that. That is never my purpose, and it is certainly not my purpose to-night; but I do say this, that those who wish to hand over everything to Russian administration as the acme, and object, and purpose of their policy, should, at anyrate, lay to heart these things.

Now, there is another policy, which is to withdraw our Ambassador from Constantinople, and to give the Turkish Ambassador here his passport. That is a policy which I understand comes to us with no less an authority than an authority that we must always revere in this hall, in this city, and in this country—Mr. Gladstone. I am obliged to differ from Mr. Gladstone on this question, but we

differ as friends. This morning only I had a long and affectionate letter from him in answer to the announcement of my resignation, which I shall always cherish, and whatever our differences on public policy may be, what has passed between Mr. Gladstone and myself is too deep-rooted, too entwined in all that I value and hold dear in public life—whatever our differences of opinion may be, that never could alter the veneration, respect, and deep affection with which I regard him. Nay, I must say one word more. Perhaps Mr. Gladstone has been the indirect cause, or the latest indirect cause, of the action that I have thought right to take, and to which you have alluded. But let none think that for that reason I have regretted his intervention in the Armenian question. It is now seventeen years ago since Mr. Gladstone came to Midlothian. I remember then making a speech in which I said that we welcomed the sight of a great statesman, full of years and full of honours, coming down at his advanced period of life to fight one supreme battle on behalf of liberty in Europe. Little did I think then that seventeen years later I should see a still nobler sight—a statesman—the same statesman—fuller still of years, and, if possible, still fuller of honours, coming out and leaving a well-earned retirement which the whole nation watches with tenderness

and solicitude, to fight another battle, but I hope not the last, on behalf of the principles in which his life has been spent.

Sir, with that preface I must say that I do not agree with the proposal to withdraw our Ambassador in Constantinople. In the first place, it withdraws our presence from the European concert, it necessitates our handing over our interests to the Ambassador of some friendly State. But friendly as that State may be, I should prefer those interests remaining in the hands of our own Ambassador, more especially when I observe the tone of the European press. In the next place, we lose the remaining method by which we could influence the policy of the Sultan. You may say that is a feeble and ineffectual method, but it is, after all, the only method, and in the present shocking state of affairs in the East I should think long and carefully before I cut myself off from even that method. In the next place, if you withdraw your Embassy, it will have an even more regrettable effect. It would deprive your Consuls in Asia Minor—throughout the Turkish Empire, indeed—of almost all their use and their employment. They would be reduced to commercial functions, they would be thwarted and harassed at every turn by the Turkish authorities; while at present they do in some respects act as an assistance and guide to

those suffering Armenians who still look to England for help; and they are now, at anyrate, and have been in the past, the only channels through which trustworthy information of their condition has reached the outer world. I say, then, that I am unwilling by the withdrawal of an Ambassador to cut myself off from these valuable instruments; but I will go a step farther in deprecating this policy. It is one of the ways by which, without meaning it, you may drift into war. The withdrawal of an Ambassador, and the dismissal of the corresponding Ambassador, is after all, in its essence, a great affront offered by one Empire to another. When you once begin on the policy of affronts, you do not know where you may end; and, though I am quite aware it is possible and not infrequent to suspend diplomatic relations in cases where you do not mean to go to war, I very much deprecate that course in instances where you need to be linked with the spot at which diplomacy is acting, and where, on the other hand, in the strained condition of affairs you know not at any moment by what act or by what incident you may find yourself in the condition of war, which you profess yourself to be anxious to avoid. Well, there is another part of Mr. Gladstone's policy which I deprecate, but which I am not quite sure if I understand. If I have misunderstood it, I

offer my apology, and I beg that any remarks upon it may be considered cancelled. But what I understand it to be is this, that you are to put pressure on the Sultan by threatening him with certain action, but if you find you get no support from the other Powers, you are not to take action, but that then you are to throw the whole of the responsibility on the other Powers, and withdraw, so to speak, into your shell. Now, I protest against that policy. It seems to me to be a most unfortunate one, because, after all, if you can have concert with Europe, bring your concert, as I have said, to bear on the whole question. But do not first announce action, and then, when you are unable to take action, withdraw, because you will only find yourself in the same position in which you are now—*plus* a public and humiliating confession of impotence. Then, I further say this, that if there is one rule in diplomacy which I regard as sacred it is this—you should never put your foot forward farther in diplomacy than you can keep it down. I in this matter would have England not put her foot an inch farther than she can keep it, because, if so, her influence, which is complained of as being insufficient, would gradually be reduced to something less than nothing.

I am sorry to say that I have another point

of disagreement with Mr. Gladstone, and with some orators who are also friends of mine. That is with regard to what is known as the Cyprus Convention. Mr. Gladstone holds that we are bound in honour by the Cyprus Convention to intervene; and that if, having—I think I state the arguments clearly—and that if, having taken certain responsibilities upon ourselves, we do not discharge these responsibilities, because other Powers prevent us, then that the word "honour" should be erased from our dictionary. Well, I confess that I do not hold that we are bound in honour by the Cyprus Convention. I have always felt and have always acted when at the Foreign Office upon the presumption that, the Sultan not having fulfilled, or tried to fulfil, any one of his pledges under that convention, we have equally been released from ours. I believe—and I do not rely on the description which the author, Lord Salisbury, gave of it at his Nonconformist dinner this year—I believe, and shall always believe, that that convention has been a dead letter since it was signed. The Sultan, in the first place, as I have said, has never performed his part; but what is more important to us is this, that we have never performed our part, and that, from the time that convention was signed, I do not believe, in the nineteen years or so that have elapsed, any single

Government, Liberal or Conservative, has ever taken action to fulfil its pledges under that convention. A gentleman says "Shame," but my impression is that it was found to be an impracticable and a futile convention, and that Governments, whether Liberal or Tory, were only too glad to find that as the Sultan did not fulfil his part, also that we were liberated from our part, and had no further duties or responsibilities otherwise. If those Governments—of two or three of which I have been a member—if those Governments have thought that they were bound by the terms of the Cyprus Convention to interfere authoritatively, and by force if necessary, to secure the good government of the Ottoman Empire, all I can say is this, that they were guilty of a grave dereliction of duty; and that, whether they were guilty of a grave dereliction of duty or not, they have for eighteen or nineteen years passed *sub silentio* the second and operative clause of that treaty; and they are not entitled, in my opinion, in the nineteenth year to come down and say that they are bound in honour or in law to interfere, by force if necessary, to secure the good government of the Ottoman Empire. It is quite true, I think, that some consular officials were appointed in 1879 to supervise any reforms that might be carried out; but in the next year, I think, or very shortly

afterwards, they were withdrawn, I suppose because they had no reforms to supervise. That is, so far as I know—and I think I am pretty well informed on that subject—the only action that has been taken under the great Cyprus Convention. Now, gentlemen, what is the Cyprus Convention? I can give it to you in three words. By the first clause, which is somewhat extraordinary, Great Britain pledges herself to assist the Sultan to defend the Empire against aggression. In the next place, the Sultan promises to introduce reforms. In the third place, Great Britain takes over Cyprus, in order—I confess I think it is a *non sequitur*—but in order to enable it to carry out those promises in that convention. These are the three clauses. The first clause has never been attempted to be carried out. The second clause has never been attempted to be carried out. The third clause, the occupation of Cyprus, has been most conscientiously carried out. I say, then, that that convention has been practically abrogated by disuse. It has been null and void from the beginning, and, with the exception of the occupation of Cyprus, no action has ever been taken under it. And I venture to say this, that in my opinion, if the Government that came in in 1880, after the Midlothian campaign, had thought that the convention was operative, they would have felt bound to denounce

it, as pledging them in explicit terms to defend a Government and an Empire which they had denounced in such scathing terms when they were in opposition. Now, you may say that if a treaty is not explicitly renounced or repealed, it remains operative. I advise you not to hold that doctrine; it may take you a good deal farther than you think.

There is a much more drastic instrument in existence, undenounced, unrepealed, still in force on paper. It is called the Tripartite Treaty. It was concluded in 1856 between the Governments of Austria, France, and Great Britain, and those Governments in it bind themselves in the most solemn and drastic terms to maintain in its strictest sense the independence and the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. That was in 1856. Since that time, by war and under the auspices of Europe, the Ottoman Empire has seen itself deprived of some of its fairest provinces. None of the three great contracting Powers who guarantee the integrity of that Empire, think that it is their duty to lift up a finger to prevent the dismemberment. Surely, if one treaty is in force, the other treaty is in force; and surely, if the word "honour" is to be expunged from our dictionary for the neglect of a convention which I think I have shown was null and void from the beginning, some

word even more forcible than "honour" must be expunged for our explicit disregard of the terms of the Tripartite Treaty. Now I contend, as regards this convention, that it was never operative ; that it was a stillborn child from the very beginning ; that we never intended to execute the first article, pledging us to defend the Turkish Empire ; and that in practice deprives us of the right to interfere, except by authoritative advice, with regard to the second article, and the execution of reforms. I might add to that, which I think is a sufficiently compendious condemnation of our obligations under the convention, that they are practically impossible to carry out, as Lord Salisbury himself said, though I confess I thought it a humiliating avowal for the author of the convention. We cannot by any means, as a naval Power, interfere in the internal districts of Asia Minor. But if then it be, as I believe it to be, impracticable to carry out, and if we are not, as I maintain we are not, bound in honour to carry it out, I say that neither in honour nor by practicability are we to be considered bound to carry out the terms of the Cyprus Convention. There is perhaps always a sting in the word honour. If that sting applies, it applies not to the nation now, which has apparently for the first time woke up to the obligations of the Cyprus Convention after eighteen or nineteen

years; it may apply possibly to the authors of that convention, but, in my opinion, to no other Englishman, Scotchman, Irishman, or Welshman whatever.

Then there remains the third clause, which we have faithfully carried out. There remains this Island of Cyprus. Now, I am not very much in love with the Island of Cyprus. I have never been able to see any good that it did us. I am a disbeliever in its strategical importance. It has no harbour, and it would cost an enormous sum of money to make an available harbour. I therefore am not particularly anxious to retain the Island of Cyprus, which some regard as a proof of our dishonour in the Eastern Question; but I would ask you, if we give up Cyprus, to whom are we to hand it over? Its proper and legal possessor is the Sultan. I do not envy any Ministry in Great Britain that would attempt to hand over an inch of territory to the Sultan. But as regards the Island of Cyprus, I will say this, that if as a proof of our disinterestedness, if as a price to pay for a large-minded dealing with the Eastern Question on the part of the Powers of Europe, we were asked to give up Cyprus, I myself, with a reservation that we should not hand it over to the Sultan, and with certain other reservations which are not material to our discussion to-night, should think

the handing over of Cyprus a very cheap price to pay for the concert of Europe on this question.

Then there are others who say, "Why should we not act alone? We have a righteous cause, we have a mighty fleet, we have millions of money." It reminds me—this argument—rather of a certain popular refrain well known at the music-halls about 1878, which gives its name to a party which we used not to regard with much approbation. You will remember the lines, "We don't want to fight, but, by Jingo, if we do, we have the ships, we have the men, we have the money too." Well, these people, gnashing their teeth, as I think, with righteous indignation at the horrors that are being carried on in the eastern part of Europe, feel that, if nobody else will go in, why should we not go in ourselves? I had at the beginning of this agitation, in fact when the massacres had taken place, but before the agitation had begun—it must have been early in September—a letter from an intelligent and a very right-thinking lady, who said, "Why, if Europe fails us, why do we not go in alone? We might be shattered, but in what nobler cause could Great Britain be shattered?" I wrote back, after some deliberation, to say that I did not wish Great Britain to be shattered, and she rejoined, "My Lord, your answer saddened me." I do not know that everybody goes as far as this lady, but there

are a great many who argue in a way that, consciously or unconsciously, leads only to the same logical conclusion, and on this point I must speak without possibility of compromise or misunderstanding. Against the policy of solitary interference in the affairs of the East I am prepared to fight tooth and nail. The party who support the interest of peace must also be vigilant, and must also be prepared to fight tooth and nail if they do not wish that isolated policy to be carried out. Mr. Gladstone speaks, urging, as I think, indirectly, some idea of this kind—speaks of the phantasm of a European war being excited by any such thing. I believe it is no phantasm at all. I am convinced, as far as my information and my knowledge go,—and up to recently I think that knowledge and information were sound although the situation may have changed for the better,—I do believe that there was a fixed and resolute agreement on the part of the Great Powers of Europe, all of them, or nearly all of them, to resist by force any single-handed intervention by England in the affairs of the East. Well, if so, I do not say "Shame," as somebody in the gallery says. I do not criticise. That is not my purpose to-night. I only want to point out the practical result, that if that fact is true, and I believe it to have been very recently true, isolated action by Great Britain means a European war.

You know what a European war means. It means the massacre, the slaughter, of hundreds of thousands of people; it means the ruin and devastation of the regions it invests; it means danger to many countries, and perhaps worse to this country —almost our national existence. It means that, on the hypothesis that our fleet would be engaged largely in the extreme east of Europe, our coasts, our liberties, our properties, would be largely exposed to attack at home; and in all probability the war would be preceded by the extermination of those very Armenian populations on whose behalf you proposed to engage in it. I say I can conceive nothing more futile, more disastrous, more dangerous than such a policy as this; and it is against this that I raise my earnest protest. Some of you belong to a generation which has grown up unconscious of the horrors of war, but in this city you, at anyrate, remember that old legend of the ghastly phantom that appeared over the Market-Cross before the battle of Flodden, that summoned in awful tones King, Lords, Knights, and Commons to appear within forty days at the judgment seat in another world. Flodden was bad for Scotland; a European war in which we were engaged would transcend twenty Floddens; and that angel of death who appeared, or was said to appear, in Edinburgh before Flodden, would

appear in every hamlet, every village, every town in our kingdom, to summon your sons, your brothers, the flower of your youth and manhood to lose their lives in this European conflagration. I do not say that I am unwilling to draw the sword in a just and necessary cause. I have myself, while a Minister, incurred the risk of war. I do not believe that any British Minister, with reference to the vast interests committed to his charge, can avoid the risk of war; but I say that any British Minister who engages in a European war, except under the pressure of the direst necessity, except under interests directly and distinctively British, is a criminal to his country and to his position. There is one point, too, about any war in which you might engage in the East. The United Kingdom is the heart of the Empire, but the greatest part of the Empire lies outside the United Kingdom. You have those vast colonies which are your pride. I believe that the colonies of Great Britain, in support of Great Britain in a just and necessary war, would rise, and without hesitation would stand by the mother country; but I confess I do not feel the conviction of the enthusiasm, or that readiness in regard to a war waged on behalf of the Armenian interests in the East. My impression is this. That the colonies would rather take the attitude of a nation

not less Anglo-Saxon, not less Christian, and much more populous than yours—a nation whose interests and whose subjects have been more directly affected by these outrages than your own —I mean the United States ; and, while willing to join in diplomatic action, would deprecate invoking the arbitrament of the sword on a question which does not directly concern their vital interests.

There is one vital consideration connected with all our foreign policy which I have not seen noticed, and to which I must call your attention in a sentence—that is, the character of the British Empire itself; and it is a consideration not applicable to this question alone, but to the whole course of your foreign and your colonial policy. The British Empire is, in truth — as Napoleon III. said quite falsely of his empire—the British Empire is peace. It means peace and it needs peace. For the last twenty years, still more during the last twelve, you have been laying your hands, with almost frantic eagerness, on every tract of territory adjacent to your own or desirable from any point of view which you thought it desirable to take. That has had two results. I daresay it has been quite right, but it has had two results. The first result is this, that you have excited to an almost intolerable degree the envy of other colonising nations, and that, in the case

of many countries, or several countries rather, which were formerly friendly to you, you can reckon, in consequence of your colonial policy, whether right or wrong—and I myself am supposed to be rather a sinner in that respect—you can reckon, not on their active benevolence, but on their active malevolence. And secondly, you have acquired so enormous a mass of territory that it will be years before you can settle it or control it, or make it capable of defence or make it amenable to the acts of your administration. Have you any notion what it is that you have added to the Empire in the last few years? I have taken the trouble to make a computation which I believe to be correct. In twelve years you have added to the Empire, whether in the shape of actual annexation or of dominion, or what is called a sphere of influence, 2,600,000 square miles of territory. I observe you sigh. Whether it is with a sense of repletion or relief at hearing you have so much undigested empire about you I will not stop to inquire. But just compare these figures; it will show you more clearly what you have done. While the area of the United Kingdom—England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, the Channel Islands, and so forth—has 120,000 square miles, therefore to the 120,000 square miles of the United Kingdom, which is a

part of your Empire, you have added during the past twelve years twenty-two areas as large as that United Kingdom itself. I say this, that that marks out for many years a policy from which you cannot depart if you would. You may be compelled to draw the sword—I hope you may not be; but the foreign policy of Great Britain until its territory is consolidated, filled up, settled, civilised, must inevitably be a policy of peace. You may fairly ask me, having discussed all those other remedies with disapprobation, to what do you look yourself for dealing with this question. No gentleman has a right in the medical profession to condemn the pills of his opponents without offering some medicaments of his own. My view—I am afraid it is not a very fresh one, but it is equally certain it is the only sound one—my only panacea for dealing with the Eastern Question is the concerted action of the Powers.

It may not be all the Powers—I should greatly prefer it were all the Powers; but at anyrate the concerted action of the Powers most immediately interested is the only way in which you can deal with the Eastern Question. Now, I know very well that the concert of Europe is not in particularly good odour at this moment—I think with very good reason. It has been impotent, and it is, or at least they say it is. I cannot so readily

give up the concert of Europe. I was politically bred and suckled on the concert of Europe, and it is not at this comparatively late stage of my existence that I can afford to give up *in toto* the concert of Europe. The concert of Europe is not impotent. It was extremely powerful last year, but, unfortunately, it was powerful in a sense opposed to the British policy. It was the power of the concert of Europe behind Russia that thwarted British policy, and it is the object of every British statesman who is worthy of the name to obtain concerted action in favour of that policy. Now, I venture to say that a question of the magnitude of the Eastern Question can only be settled by that august tribunal which is called the Concert of European Powers. Whether they meet in congress, or whether they join in action together, or whether they only act by diplomatic pressure, they are omnipotent in this Eastern Question, and every other method of dealing with it is comparatively impotent; and I am inclined to found some hopes that their action may not be unfriendly to us on this occasion. I found it on two reasons—first, I think that, after the flagrant exhibition given of the Sultan's methods of government in the streets of Constantinople lately, it is not possible for them to abstain from taking steps to prevent those massacres in the future.

Their press is not altogether friendly to such action. Their people are not fully informed, but the hearts of the people of the continent of Europe are in the same place as your hearts, and they have only got to realise the infamies that have been committed, and to some extent tolerated by the Powers that govern them, to insist that that opinion, which is powerful even in the case of a despotism, should take up action to prevent their recurrence. And in the next place, I found my hopes on this, whether the Powers like it or not, sure I am that they will not, for their own comfort and convenience, postpone the consideration of this thorny question. Whether they like it or not, the condition of the Turkish Empire, the political condition, the financial condition, the moral condition of the Turkish Empire, is such that it must soon invite, in terms and in a manner which cannot be withstood, the anxious consideration and settlement of the Powers. I venture to say that, though we long suffered the Sick Man, he is sicker now than ever. His methods are exposed, his Government is discredited, his massacres have got rid of some of his best tax-paying subjects, and it transcends the ability even of a Sultan or a Kurd to extract the taxes from an Armenian corpse. A great darkness is falling over them. The writing is upon the wall, and

even if the Powers neglect these serious intimations, which are only too visible in the state of Turkey, of its condition of decay, they cannot long postpone that action, however much they may wish they could.

One word more on this point. You say, with a sense of disappointment, "After all, this is only diplomacy; these are only diplomatic methods, soft methods, wheedling methods. O for something manly and downright! O for an hour of Cromwell and his action!" I knew the name of Cromwell would elicit a cheer. He has been frequently summoned from his grave to do duty at these recent meetings, but I think with an imperfect knowledge of what Cromwell really did. Cromwell interfered, it is true, on behalf of people oppressed much as these Armenians are. He wrote, or rather he signed some letters on that subject, which were written by John Milton and signed by Oliver Cromwell, an august conjunction, which in their agony and vehemence of pathos still thrill our hearts across the generations that separate us. And, gentlemen, if this Eastern Question has no other result than this to you, I hope it will make you betake yourselves to those sublime despatches. You will be amply repaid by reading the letters which Milton himself wrote. There is nothing more eloquent or more noble, and they

are worthy of the signature of Oliver Cromwell. But how did Oliver Cromwell protect these people? How did he save these people? Did he bombard anybody? Did he declare war against anybody? Did he take isolated action against anybody? He did none of these things. He took diplomatic action. He knew, as we know, that he could not with a fleet reach the scene of the outrages. He knew that there was another Sovereign who could, and by diplomatic pressure he induced that Sovereign to take action, which in the end preserved the lives and the liberties of these unhappy people. Well, we are apparently each of us worth a dozen Cromwells now. We all know something "manlier" or "finer" than to trust to the concerted action of the Powers of Europe. There may be things manlier and there may be things finer; but nothing else, I venture to say, for dealing with the future of the Ottoman Empire is either safe or efficacious. I know very well that this is not the popular side of the question. I believe that it is the unpopular side of the question. I care very little in this matter which it is—the unpopular or the popular side. I remember very well that, when I was a child, Mr. Bright and Mr. Cobden were hounded out of public life for opposing a war for which no one now ventures to say a word in defence. I remember when I was grown

up, Mr. Gladstone had his windows broken, and was mobbed in London for advocating a policy on this very Eastern Question, which at the general election two years afterwards was the policy of the nation itself. And therefore I care very little about popularity or unpopularity in this matter. But let me make it clear what it is that I advocate, and what it is that I fear.

I advocate concerted action as the only solid, safe, and effectual method of dealing with this question. I deprecate any other method as both futile and dangerous. Against any other, which may imply the solitary intervention of England, I will raise my voice and my strength as long as I have voice and strength to exert. I am not less haunted than you are by the horrors of Armenia, by the horrors that have transformed an earthly paradise into an organised hell. For all that, I would not attempt to do away with those horrors by adding to them a horror a hundredfold greater. We are a great nation and a just nation; but, to employ the fine phrase of Mr. Gladstone, "we do not wield the sword of the Almighty." It is not ours to dispense in this world universally the punishment of wrong and the reward of right. We have to balance, as it were, between two evils, and of the two I cannot balance between the evil of Armenian massacre alone and the evil of

Armenian masscre *plus* European war. There is no doubt a certain concord that reigns over the aspect of Europe at this moment. But that concord is chiefly directed, not in your favour, but against you. Remember, however you may be appeased by the aspect of Europe, that for years and years past there has hung like a sullen cloud over the Continent the murderous spectre of that conflict of the nations for which the peoples of Europe have been standing in battle array. A little thing might fall out and call down that storm, and I venture to warn you that your diplomacy in this Eastern Question must be cautious as well as straightforward if you do not mean to call down that storm. I know I shall be told to-morrow, as I have been told before, "Nobody wants war. What are you arguing against in arguing against war?" It is not so much what you want that I dread. It is not so much what you say that I dread. It is not so much what you mean that I dread. But it is where your language, if it has any logical meaning at all, will irresistibly land you. It is, then, against a solitary and feverish intervention in the East, against which I enter my deliberate protest. Some persons, some guides of public opinion, are trying to work up in this country the sort of ecstasy which precedes war, even if it does not intend war. Against that I

protest, and against that I will fight. It is therefore that I implore you to walk warily in this matter, and to weigh well in the interests of yourselves, your children, your future, on behalf of the welfare, the prosperity, nay, and the safety, of the Empire of which you are so proud; to pause before you adopt any of these perilous policies of which you can see the eloquent commencement, and to which no one living can see the catastrophe or the end.

I have done with public affairs. It would be affectation to deny that you expect from me some sort of personal statement now. Much allusion has been made to a letter which appeared in the papers yesterday. I have seen it said that it would have been well if I had waited till this meeting was over before I had written that letter. In my opinion that is not a wise criticism. I have no constituents, or, if I have any constituents, it is the people of Scotland, and I think I had a right when I had come to this grave resolution to announce it before I came before my constituents, so that I should not appear among them in a false character, and should be enabled to add to my letter any further explanation that seemed to me to be necessary. I have, I am sorry to tell you, no piquant revelations to make. I think you might be satisfied with the reasons which I gave in my

letter, but some people are never satisfied. I see that some are of opinion that it is the attacks of the newspapers that have driven me from the lead of the Liberal party. That is not so. If I could have been driven from that position by attacks of newspapers, I should have been driven long ago, because they have been pretty pertinacious, and, I think, almost universal; but I myself am not one of those who see anything but good in fair and reasonable newspaper critcism. Newspaper criticism, when it is fair, and moderate, and reasonable, braces and stimulates the man whom it criticises; and when it is unfair, and immoderate, and unreasonable, it provokes a reaction in favour of the man whom it purposes to destroy. But I do not profess to found my resignation entirely on the difference of opinion that exists between me and many others on the subject of the Armenian question. It is, after all, only the last of a series of incidents. I do not think, gentlemen, that you have ever quite sufficiently realised what is the position of a Liberal leader who is also a peer. He is, parliamentarily speaking, almost impotent and helpless. He is shut up in a permanently hostile assembly with a handful of followers. His voice, under the most favourable circumstances, can only be heard in the House of Commons, the seat of power, through the mouth of another. At

a general election, when the fortunes and future of himself as well as his party are in the balance, he is restricted to absolute silence. He is, in effect, in the position of riding a horse without reins. Well, the only reason for which I mention that to you is this—that a man in that position has no chance of succeeding in the lead of the Liberal party unless he receives very exceptional support, very exceptional loyalty, and very exceptional co-operation from the party inside and outside Parliament to make up for his own inherent deficiencies. Perhaps I had no right to expect any such exceptional measure to be dealt out to me, but, at anyrate, I cannot say that I received it; rather was my being a peer, which was to some extent the reason, as I have explained, of my impotence, urged as a reason for further hampering my efforts.

Well, I do not wish to instance the events of which I say this last difference is the last, but I will take three. Before we had been in office, or rather before we had confronted Parliament for more than two days, we were defeated by our own followers by a majority of two. That was not a God-speed to the new Government, or any sign of the special and exceptional cordiality and support which was required by a Liberal Government headed by a peer. The next point to which I will

call your attention was that of the general election. I ventured, as it was my duty and my privilege to do, to urge a definite and concentrated policy on the party. That definite and concentrated policy was not adopted. And, in the third place, this last event has in my mind been, so to speak, the last straw which decided my position. Our leader—for Mr. Gladstone must always lead the Liberal party when he wishes to—our leader has come forward, as I told you, in a noble and sublime spirit, but he has equally innocently and unconsciously himself administered the final *coup de grâce* to his successor, because, however much I may differ with Mr. Gladstone in opinion on this question or any other, I never will appear in sharp conflict with him when I am holding the position, titular or otherwise, of leader of the Liberal party. That is why I claimed my freedom before I came here to-night.

The difficulties that I have recited to you are external difficulties. Of the internal difficulties I will only say that they were not less than the external. I will not say that they were more, because the external were so considerable as almost to constitute a disability of themselves; but I will say that they were not less. Of course it might have been possible, had I been in the House of Commons, to fight my own fight, and to deal

with these difficulties as they arose, imperfectly I doubt not, but in my own person. But in the position of a peer I could only speak vicariously to the House of Commons, and it is difficult, if not almost impossible, to find the particular kind of political twins that can act together in the position of leader of the House of Lords and leader of the House of Commons, when the peer is Prime Minister and the other is not. Well, I say, then, that my position was so hampered that it had almost become untenable. I think you will urge that if these were my difficulties I should have resigned earlier; but I kept my position almost beyond the conditions of dignity and of self-respect. Why, for example, you may justly say, did you not, after the general election, when a large part of your party turned their back upon your advice—why did you not say, "If you will not follow, I will not lead," and resign a position which had ceased to be either dignified or efficient? I will tell you why. In the first place, because the party was then at a very low ebb, and it would not have looked well, and it would not have been well, after holding the position that I had in office under the late Government, if at the first breath of adversity I had deserted the sinking, or the almost sunken, ship; but I am bound also to say this—and this I have never said before, but I trust my

colleagues on the platform will excuse me—ever since the general election my resignation has been in the hands of my colleagues, to use, and to put in force, whenever they should think fit and whenever the party and the unity of the party should require it. That also is the answer to what has caused surprise, that I did not consult or intimate to any of them my intention of writing the letter. That I did, because having been overridden by them before, out of their kindness and sympathy and devotion to me, against my own individual judgment, I was determined on this occasion that I should take the opportunity of overriding them. Now, gentlemen, I have gladly come forward on this occasion to lay down the proud post of leader of the Liberal party with one object alone—in order to promote unity. Let me beg, then, whatever else may be the result of my action, that my resignation may produce unity among you. If it does not unite you, the sacrifice has been made in vain. I will give you—perhaps I have no right to give it you—I will give you one piece of advice. Choose your leader with what caution, care, and deliberation you may. When you have chosen him, close up your ranks and follow him; for this I can tell you, as an absolute maxim, that a united party behind an inferior leader is more efficacious than a disunited party with the best leader that

ever lived. Well, with that axiom I shall leave the subject, but I must say one word to my colleagues, who have been somewhat unjustly aspersed. It would not do for me to select any for peculiar commendation; but I may, without invidiousness, thank those who happen to be present with us to-night, for better colleagues no man ever had. I thank Mr. Asquith, and Sir Henry Fowler, and Mr. Bryce, and Mr. Arnold Morley, who are all here to-night, for their devoted co-operation with me. If I venture to single out Mr. Asquith from even these four it is because we have been in habits of close and intimate political communion, and because I see, and see with pain, that he has been singled out for attack as not having been in hearty association with me. Nothing is more remote from the truth; nothing could be more devoid of truth. Those who say this must know Mr. Asquith very little, because, consummate and considerable as are his powers of brain, in my opinion his head is not equal to his heart; and it is that rare combination of head and heart which, in my humble judgment, if my prophecy be worth anything, will conduct him to the highest office of the State. May I say one word also to another colleague, outside the Cabinet indeed, but who has been nearer to me than some who were inside? I mean your neighbour, Mr. Munro-Ferguson of

Novar. Since he has been in public life our fortunes have been closely united; we have been rather like elder brother and younger brother than like Minister and secretary, or like two political friends; and it is a pleasure to me at this solemn moment that I have the opportunity of offering him my heartfelt thanks for all that he has done for me, and been to me in my political career. And I must also thank, whether they be present or not, that small band of Liberal peers who gave me, I believe, an absolutely unanimous support. One of them has gone beyond my voice. He has gone where no acknowledgment of mine or of any of ours will reach him. Yesterday we read, when we read of my resignation, that William, Lord Kensington, who had acted as Whip of the party, had gone to his long account. No more honest, no more strenuous, no more earnest Liberal has ever been found in the ranks of the party. And now, gentlemen, I have only to say the hardest word of all—Good-bye. There is a strange fatality that I find in political meetings in Edinburgh. It seems only yesterday that I came to my last. I had then come fresh from being appointed Prime Minister. I came to ask you in the great crisis of my fortune and my life—you, my earliest friends—to stand by me as you had stood before. I am glad that, by an accident

almost, it falls on me to lay down the leadership of the Liberal party in the very place where I took it up, in mine own ancient city, among my own neighbours, my own fellow-citizens, my own friends.

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